

# Open Research Online

---

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

## The Role of Customer Emotions in a Call Center Setting

### Thesis

#### How to cite:

Rychalski, Aude N. (2014). The Role of Customer Emotions in a Call Center Setting. PhD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2014 The Author



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000efbc>

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk)

31 0348310 4

Aude N. Rychalski



M.A.

## The Role of Customer Emotions in a Call Center Setting

PhD

The Open University

ESC Rennes Business School

DATE OF SUBMISSION: 28 April 2014

DATE OF AWARD: 12 SEPTEMBER 2014

ProQuest Number: 13834830

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 13834830

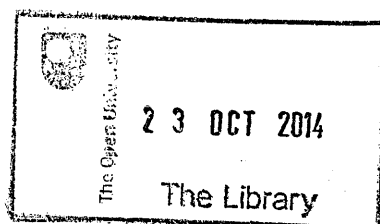
Published by ProQuest LLC (2019). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

*To my parents, Janine and Richard  
In memory of my grandfather, Paul*



DONATION

X 658.812 2014

Consultation copy



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This PhD thesis would not be achieved without the piece of advice, the support and the understanding of my supervisors, fellow researchers, colleagues, friends and family. I would like to express my grateful thanks along these lines.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Adrian Palmer, my Director of Studies and Dr. Sarah Hudson, my supervisor. Your attention and the quality of your mentoring contribute a lot both academically and on a personal level. Despite moments of doubt and questioning, you have found the words that helped me to persevere. Sarah, your guidance, your unwavering support, your availability and your critical eye have been of a great help.

I would also like to address a special word of thanks to the faculty, staff, students and friends from Rennes Business School and more particularly Dr. Rod McColl, Dr. Michael Ward, Dr Yann Truong, Dr Cyrlene Claasen, Dr Servane Delanoë, Dr Laurence Fort-Rioche, Dr Helena Gonzalez, Douglas Bryson, Stéphanie Morin, Sabine Havard and Patricia Fourel. Thank you for your support, your advice, and long discussions which reassure me.

I would also like to thank the faculty at fBS, Tours campus. François Duvergé, Béatrice Rabet, Jean-Marc Raggi, Jean-Yves Saulquin, Guillaume Schier, Flora Sfez and Richard Soparnot. Thank you for the financial support, for having fit my teaching schedule to the workload and for your great interest in my work.

There are so many colleagues at fBS, Tours campus who participated to this work from a way to another. Thanks to the people who have accepted to be interviewed, to individuals who have answered the pretest, to colleagues who simply asked after my work progress. I deeply felt encouraged by your smile and your concern. A special thanks to Michèle Canard, Philippe Callot, Jean-Luc Castelein, Luc Coniam, Eve Chevreuil, Laëtitia Coudreau, Mélanie Foin, Fabrice Mauléon, Michel Javet, Valentine Leterrier, Patricia

Lorgeoux, Elena Louicellier, Fatima Megdoud, Karine Moreau, Nadine Nicolas, Marie-Laure Paré, Céline Pournin, Valérie Robert, Jocelyne Rousseaux, Jean-François Talboutier, Jérôme Villot and Dominique Wolff.

I would also like to thank the following individuals for their daily support, advice, concerns and sense of humor: Elise Bonneveux, Géraldine de la Rupelle, Sylvie Ducroux, Annette Duval-Eliche, Franck Gavaille, Typhaine Lebègue, Marie Le Borgne-Larivière, Stéphane Malo, Angéla Mathieu, Philippe Mouricou, Philippe Naccache, Alexandre Renaud and Benoit Tricard. A special thanks to Philippe M. for your expertise in qualitative research and Sylvie for your encouraging SMS and your persuasiveness.

I also wish to thank Etienne Bosia for his trust, his valuable advice, his availability, his constant good mood and first and foremost for the time spent working and talking about AMOS.

This work would not have been achieved without the participation of the customers and the company in which data have been collected. I would like to thank A. Bergé, M. Osmani and C. Herraux for their involvement, availability and high level of confidence.

I would also like to thank Magali Ardouin for her friendship, her diplomacy and mostly her computer-knowledge. You spent so much time supporting me. Thank you for our daily laughs. I will never forget.

Thank you Ludovic: your sense of humor, energy and sarcasm really helped. I feel lucky to have you as a friend.

I would like to thank Dorothée, Philippe, Laurel, Antoine, Gaëlle J., Jérôme D., Gaëlle C., Fred, Anne-Laure, Pierre-Yves, Cécile, Stéphane, Emilie, Luhana, Adeline, Sam, Olivier V., Olivier J., Mathilde, Agathe, Thomas, Nelly, Youssef, Fanny and Benoit for catching up, for your good temper and fits of laughter. Thanks to my “Northteam”, Cyrielle, Michel,

Lucille, Caroline, Anto, Julien, Bertrand and Marc, for your friendship, your constant support, the telephone calls and breaks boosting the morale. I feel proud to have you.

I would like to thank my close relatives for their love and more particularly my parents, Janine and Richard, my sister, Estelle, her conjoint, Anthony and their little boy, Gabin.

Thank you for your full support, your encouragement, your kindness, and your extraordinary presence despite the geographical distance between all of us.

Finally, I have a special thought for my grandfather Paul. I am convinced that you would have been proud to experience the achievement of this thesis.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the role of customer emotions in a call center setting. Three empirical studies are presented: **1.** An exploratory qualitative study shows that emotions play an important role in a call center encounter. A measurement scale is developed using the negative emotions reported: frustration, anger, powerlessness, discouragement and stress, and positive emotions: happiness and relief. **2.** A survey of 1440 customers of a French call center and subsequent Structural Equation Modeling shows that emotions have a significant effect on satisfaction and loyalty. **3.** A follow-up qualitative study indicates that emotions change during the process of a call, and are accompanied by appraisals of reduced certainty and control. Frustration is shown to be a major customer emotional experience due to the set-up of call center services which generate reduced certainty and control, attributions of employee or company responsibility and appraisals of goal-blocking. The main theoretical contributions come from a) the finding that emotions have a stronger effect on loyalty than does satisfaction, b) empirical testing of a widely acknowledged (but not explicitly tested) notion that negative emotions decrease loyalty more than positive emotions increase it. In a call center context callers begin the call with some negative emotional ‘baggage’ which may enhance the effect on loyalty as compared to positive emotions, c) empirical support for Barrett et al. (2007) and Elfenbein (2007) who suggest that an emotional process characterizes emotional experience better than emotions alone. Managerial implications are a) that the call center industry needs to move away from its traditional performance-metrics basis for measuring customer satisfaction and take customer emotions into account, and b) that to ensure loyalty call center managers should focus more strongly on strategies for avoiding negative customer emotional states than for promoting positive emotions.

*“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted”*

Albert Einstein, US physicist

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.2. WHY STUDY CUSTOMER EMOTIONS IN A CALL CENTER SETTING? .....	3
1.2.1. Call center interactions are one of the most commonly experienced service encounters.....	4
1.2.2. Call center emotional experiences may differ from others because they are ‘Remote’ and ‘Lean’ .....	4
1.2.3. The role of emotions has been relatively under-researched in utilitarian services.....	6
1.2.4. Previous research in call centers has emphasized management issues.....	7
1.2.5. Research in the domain of call center industry customers has emphasized cognitive performance metrics.....	8
1.2.6. Summary of the rationale for the thesis.....	9
1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	9
1.3.1. What are the emotions experienced by French call center customers? .....	9
1.3.2. What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a customer call center encounter?.....	11
1.3.2.1. Introduction: customer emotions, satisfaction and loyalty .....	12
1.3.2.2. Antecedents of customer satisfaction in the call center industry take the cognitive ‘disconfirmation’ view.....	13
1.3.2.3. The role of emotions in customer satisfaction is known, but under-researched in a utilitarian service setting.....	15
1.3.2.4. The gaps addressed in the study of the link between emotions and satisfaction .....	15
1.3.2.5. The role of emotions in determining loyalty .....	16
1.3.2.6. The effect of positive and negative emotions on satisfaction and loyalty is distinct.....	17
1.3.2.7. The gaps addressed in the study of the link between emotions and loyalty .....	17
1.3.2.8. Description of study 2 .....	18
1.3.3. The customer emotional process in a call center encounter .....	18
1.3.3.1. The concept of emotional process provides a better basis for understanding the role of emotions in customer call center encounters than the concept of ‘emotions’ alone .....	19
1.3.3.2. The nature and measurement of satisfaction, cognitive vs. affective .....	19
1.3.3.3. Emotions and cognitive appraisals combine to form the emotional process.....	20
1.3.3.4. Frustration is a dominant emotion in a call center encounter.....	22
1.3.3.5. The gaps addressed in the study of the emotional experience.....	22
1.3.3.6. Description of study 3 .....	23
1.4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	24
1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS.....	26
1.6. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER .....	27

<b>CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	29
2.2. EMOTIONS .....	30
2.2.1. Categorization of emotions .....	30
2.2.2. Functionalist view of emotions and the emotional process.....	32
2.2.3. Appraisal theory.....	35
2.2.4. The Appraisal-Tendency Framework.....	36
2.2.5. Summary .....	37
2.3. EMOTIONS, SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY .....	37
2.3.1. Understanding the concept of satisfaction.....	37
2.3.2. Relationship between emotions and satisfaction.....	41
2.3.3. Understanding the concept of loyalty.....	50
2.3.4. Emotions and loyalty.....	52
2.3.5. Satisfaction and loyalty .....	56
2.3.6. Summary of model and hypotheses .....	57
2.3.7. Potential moderators of these relationships.....	58
2.4. THE FRUSTRATION EXPERIENCE.....	66
2.4.1. Definition of Frustration .....	66
2.4.1.1. Frustration and valence .....	67
2.4.1.2. Frustration activation and regulatory focus.....	67
2.4.1.3. Frustration and regulatory focus .....	68
2.4.2. Cognitive appraisal theory and frustration .....	68
2.4.2.1. Frustration and goals blocked .....	68
2.4.2.2. Frustration and effort.....	69
2.4.2.3. Frustration and uncertainty .....	69
2.4.2.4. Frustration, control and responsibility.....	69
2.4.2.5. Frustration and time .....	70
2.4.3. Responses to frustration .....	70
2.4.3.1. Adaptive responses.....	70
2.4.3.2. Maladaptive responses .....	71
2.5. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	73
 <b>CHAPTER 3. THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....</b>	 <b>74</b>
3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	75
3.2. EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACHES .....	76
3.3. MIXED-METHODS APPROACH .....	79
3.4. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN.....	81
3.5. STUDY 1: WHAT ARE THE EMOTIONS EXPERIENCED BY CALL CENTER CUSTOMERS?.....	82
3.5.1. Introduction.....	82
3.5.2. Study 1a - Focus groups: Do customers experience emotions during a call center encounter? .....	83
3.5.2.1. Study 1a: Aims.....	83
3.5.2.2. Study 1a: Method .....	84
3.5.2.3. Study 1a: Procedure .....	84
3.5.2.4. Study 1a: Participants.....	85
3.5.2.5. Study 1a: Analysis .....	85
3.5.2.6. Study 1a: General results .....	90

3.5.2.7. Study 1a: Implications for later phases .....	91
3.5.3. Study 1b - In-depth interviews: What are the emotions reported by call center customers when recalling a recent encounter? .....	91
3.5.3.1. Study 1b: Aims.....	91
3.5.3.2. Study 1b: Method.....	91
3.5.3.3. Study 1b: Procedure .....	93
3.5.3.4. Study 1b: Participants .....	93
3.5.3.5. Study 1b: Analysis .....	95
3.5.3.6. Study 1b: General results .....	98
3.5.3.7. Study 1b: Implications for later phases .....	98
3.6. STUDY 2: WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ON SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY?.....	99
3.6.1. Introduction.....	99
3.6.2. Study 2a: Development of the measurement instrument –Are the scales valid and reliable? .....	100
3.6.2.1. Study 2a: Aims.....	100
3.6.2.2. Study 2a: Method.....	100
3.6.2.3. Study 2a: Procedure .....	101
3.6.3. Study 2b: Hypothesis Testing and Structural Equation Modeling .....	108
3.6.3.1. Study 2b: Aims.....	108
3.6.3.2. Study 2b: Method.....	108
3.6.3.3. Study 2b: Procedure .....	109
3.6.3.4. Study 2b: Participants .....	111
3.6.3.5. Study 2b: Analysis .....	113
3.6.3.6. Study 2b: General results .....	116
3.6.3.7. Study 2b: Implications for later phases .....	117
3.7. STUDY 3: WHAT IS THE CUSTOMER EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE DURING A NEGATIVE CALL CENTER ENCOUNTER?.....	118
3.7.1. Introduction.....	118
3.7.2. Study 3: Aims.....	119
3.7.3. Study 3: Method.....	119
3.7.4. Study 3: Procedure .....	119
3.7.5. Study 3: Participants .....	120
3.7.6. Study 3: Analysis .....	120
3.7.7. Study 3: General results .....	122
3.8. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER .....	123

## **CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS.....124**

4.1. INTRODUCTION.....	125
4.2. STUDY 1: FINDINGS .....	127
4.2.1. Study 1a: Findings .....	128
4.2.1.1. The contextual elements of emotions .....	128
4.2.1.2. Emotions in call center encounters.....	132
4.2.2. Study 1b: Findings .....	136
4.2.2.1. The positive emotions .....	137
4.2.2.2. The negative emotions .....	137
4.2.3. Study 1: Summary of the results .....	146
4.3. STUDY 2: FINDINGS .....	146
4.3.1. Study 2a: Findings of the quantitative pilot test.....	148



4.3.1.1. Study 2a: Sample statistics.....	148
4.3.1.2. Study 2a: Construct validity.....	149
4.3.1.3. Study 2a: Scale reliability .....	151
4.3.1.4. Study 2a: Normality testing .....	152
4.3.2. Study 2b: Findings of the main quantitative study .....	153
4.3.2.1. Study 2b: Sample statistics.....	153
4.3.2.2. Study 2b: Model testing, model fit and estimation methods .....	155
4.3.2.3. Study 2b: Hypothesis testing.....	159
4.3.2.4. Study 2b: Outcomes of hypotheses .....	161
4.3.2.5. Study 2b: Summary of the results .....	163
4.3.3. Study 2: Summary of the results .....	164
4.4. STUDY 3: FINDINGS.....	165
4.4.1. Before the call .....	166
4.4.1.1. Negative emotional states .....	166
4.4.1.2. Frustration occurs for those whose goals are blocked.....	166
4.4.1.3. Negative emotions are experienced when goals are important .....	166
4.4.1.4. Uncertainty and initial emotions .....	167
4.4.1.5. Emotions, control and responsibility.....	168
4.4.1.6. Intermediate summary of the results .....	170
4.4.2. During the call.....	171
4.4.2.1. Emotions .....	171
4.4.2.2. Frustration, temporary goal blocks, uncertainty and control.....	171
4.4.2.3. Intermediate summary of the results .....	176
4.4.3. After the call: adaptive and maladaptive responses .....	176
4.4.3.1. Adaptive responses.....	176
4.4.3.2. Maladaptive responses .....	177
4.4.3.3. Intermediary summary of the results.....	178
4.4.4. Study 3: Summary of the results .....	178
4.5. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	181

## **CHAPTER 5. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS .....182**

5.1. INTRODUCTION.....	183
5.2. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS .....	184
5.2.1. Research Question 1. What are the emotions experienced by call center customers? .....	184
5.2.2. Research Question 2. What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a customer call center encounter? .....	187
5.2.3. Research Question 3. What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter? .....	190
5.3. SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS .....	193
5.4. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS .....	194
5.5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS.....	201
5.5.1. Limitations .....	201
5.5.2. Future Areas of Research .....	203
5.6. CONCLUSION .....	204

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY .....206**

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1. Structure of Chapter 1 .....	3
Table 1.2. Performance Measures used in the Call Center Industry .....	14
Table 1.3. Research Gaps, Research Questions and Intended Contributions .....	25
Table 2.1. Structure of Chapter 2.....	29
Table 2.2. Previous Studies on the Emotions-Satisfaction Link.....	46
Table 2.3. Research Hypotheses .....	57
Table 2.4. Potential Moderators of the Satisfaction-Loyalty Relationship .....	60
Table 3.1. Structure of Chapter 3.....	75
Table 3.2. General Differences between Positivism and Interpretivism.....	77
Table 3.3. Study 1a. Participants in focus groups.....	85
Table 3.4. Data Analysis Procedure.....	87
Table 3.5. Study 1b. Participants in in-depth interviews .....	94
Table 3.6. Study 3. Definition of Themes and Categories used in Analysis.....	122
Table 4.1. Structure of Chapter 4.....	127
Table 4.2. Study 1a. Contextual Elements of Emotions– Terms and Verbatim extracts .....	129
Table 4.3. Study 1a. Positive Emotions – Terms and Verbatim extracts.....	133
Table 4.4. Study 1a. Negative Emotional State – Terms and Verbatim extracts .....	134
Table 4.5. Study 1b. Positive Emotions –Terms and Verbatim extracts.....	138
Table 4.6. Study 1b. Negative Emotional State –Terms and Verbatim extracts.....	140
Table 4.7. Study 1b. Coding Structure.....	145
Table 4.8. Study 2. Research Hypotheses.....	147
Table 4.9. Study 2a. KMO and Bartlett Tests for Emotions and Loyalty .....	149
Table 4.10. Study 2a. Factor Loadings for Emotions .....	150
Table 4.11. Study 2a. Amount of Variance for Emotions.....	150
Table 4.12. Study 2a. Factor Loadings for Loyalty .....	151
Table 4.13. Study 2a. Amount of Variance for Loyalty.....	151
Table 4.14. Study 2a. Normality Testing for the Variables .....	152
Table 4.15. Study 2b. Binomial Test for Gender .....	154
Table 4.16. Study 2b. Chi-square Test for Calling Issues.....	154
Table 4.17. Study 2b. Construct Evaluation .....	156
Table 4.18. Study 2b. Justifications for Discriminant Validity.....	157
Table 4.19. Study 2b. Normality Testing for the Variables .....	157
Table 4.20. Study 2b. Unstandardized Regression Weights and p-values.....	160
Table 4.21. Study 2b. Summary of the Hypotheses and Findings .....	163
Table 4.22. Study 3. Issues in Caller Frustration and Verbatim extracts.....	174
Table 4.23. Study 3. Attribution of Responsibility in situations of reduced control .....	175
Table 5.1. Overall and Specific Intended Contributions.....	183
Table 5.2. Structure of Chapter 5.....	184

Table 5.3. Summary of Overall and Specific Theoretical Contributions.....	194
Table 5.4. Summary of the Overall and Specific Managerial Implications.....	198
Table 5.5. Summary of the Overall Research Gaps, Overall Research Questions, Overall Theoretical Contributions and Overall Managerial Implications.....	199
Table 5.6. Summary of the Specific Research Gaps, Specific Research Questions, Specific Theoretical Contributions and Specific Managerial Implications.....	200

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. The Emotional Process .....	21
Figure 1.2. Illustration of the ‘cause-effect’ view.....	21
Figure 2.1. The Pleasure Arousal Dominance Framework .....	31
Figure 2.2. Integrated Intrapersonal Process Framework for Emotions in Organizations .....	34
Figure 2.3. Relative Attitude – Behavior Relationship.....	52
Figure 2.4. The Conceptual Model .....	57
Figure 3.1. Research Design Process .....	76
Figure 3.2. Multiple Methods Design .....	80
Figure 3.3. Multiple Methods Design used in this Thesis.....	81
Figure 3.4. Research Design Process - Study 1a.....	83
Figure 3.5. Study 1a. Organization of the Six Tree Nodes and Theoretical Dimensions .....	89
Figure 3.6. Study 1a. Number of Nodes and References per Focus group .....	90
Figure 3.7. Research Design Process - Study 1b .....	91
Figure 3.8. Study 1b. Organization of the Tree Nodes and Theoretical Dimensions .....	96
Figure 3.9. Study 1b. Number of Nodes and References per Interview .....	97
Figure 3.10. Procedure for Developing Measurement Scale .....	98
Figure 3.11. Research Design Process - Study 2a.....	100
Figure 3.12. Research Design Process- Study 2b .....	108
Figure 3.13. Study 2b. Structural Model and Relationships between Variables.....	116
Figure 3.14. Research Design Process - Study 3 .....	118
Figure 5.1. The Holistic Emotional Process .....	186

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1. Study 1a. The discussion guide .....230

Appendix 2. Study 1a. Transcripts of the 2 focus groups .....231

Appendix 3. Study 1a. Translations of the 2 focus groups in English .....241

Appendix 4. Study 1b. The interview guideline .....249

Appendix 5. Study 1b. Transcripts of the 3 selected in-depth interviews.....250

Appendix 6. Study 1b. Translations of the 3 selected in-depth interviews in English.....258

Appendix 7. Study 2b. The questionnaire.....265

Appendix 8. Study 3. The moderator’s instructions guide.....270

Appendix 9. Study 3. The discussion guide.....271

Appendix 10. Study 3. Transcripts of 3 selected focus-groups.....272

Appendix 11. Study 2b. Model Fit Summary .....291

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ACD:</b>	Automated Call Distribution
<b>AGFI:</b>	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
<b>ATF:</b>	Appraisal-Tendency Framework
<b>AVE:</b>	Average Variance Extracted
<b>CR:</b>	Composite Reliability
<b>CCR:</b>	Call Centre Representative
<b>CFA:</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
<b>CFI:</b>	Comparative Fit Index
<b>DV:</b>	Dependent Variable
<b>GFI:</b>	Goodness of Fit Index
<b>EFA:</b>	Exploratory Factor Analysis
<b>ITC:</b>	Integrated Telephone Computer
<b>IV:</b>	Independent Variable
<b>KMO:</b>	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
<b>MLE:</b>	Maximum Likelihood Estimation
<b>NWOM:</b>	Negative word of mouth
<b>PCA:</b>	Principal Component Analysis
<b>PWOM:</b>	Positive word of mouth
<b>RMSEA:</b>	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
<b>SEM:</b>	Structural Equation Modeling
<b>SMC:</b>	Squared Multiple Correlation
<b>TLI:</b>	Tucker-Lewis Index
<b>WOM:</b>	Word of mouth

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 1 Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rationale for Studying Emotions in a Call Center Setting</li><li>• Research Objectives and Research Questions</li><li>• Summary and Conclusions</li><li>• Structure of the Thesis</li></ul>
Chapter 2 Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emotions</li><li>• Appraisal Theory</li><li>• The Appraisal-Tendency Framework</li><li>• Emotions, Satisfaction and Loyalty</li><li>• The Frustration Experience</li></ul>
Chapter 3 The Methodological Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pragmatism</li><li>• Mixed-Methods Approach</li><li>• Justifications for the Methodology</li><li>• Methodology for Study 1, Study 2 and Study 3: Aims, procedures, participants, analysis techniques and implications for later phases</li></ul>
Chapter 4 Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data Analysis</li><li>• Findings</li><li>• Summary of the Findings and Discussion</li></ul>
Chapter 5 General Discussion and Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall Discussion of the Findings</li><li>• Theoretical and Managerial Implications</li><li>• Limitations</li><li>• Areas for Future Research</li><li>• Conclusion</li></ul>

## 1.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the thesis whose aim is to provide an answer to the research question:

*What is the role of customer emotions in a call center setting?*

In order to provide a full answer to this question, three studies were carried out. A qualitative exploratory stage sought to identify the specific customer emotions that play a role in a call center encounter. The emotions found from this study were used to create a measurement scale for emotions, and thus informed a second quantitative stage (study 2).

Second, a survey of customers of a major call center in France (study 2) with subsequent structural equation modeling aimed at investigating the effect of emotions on both satisfaction and loyalty.

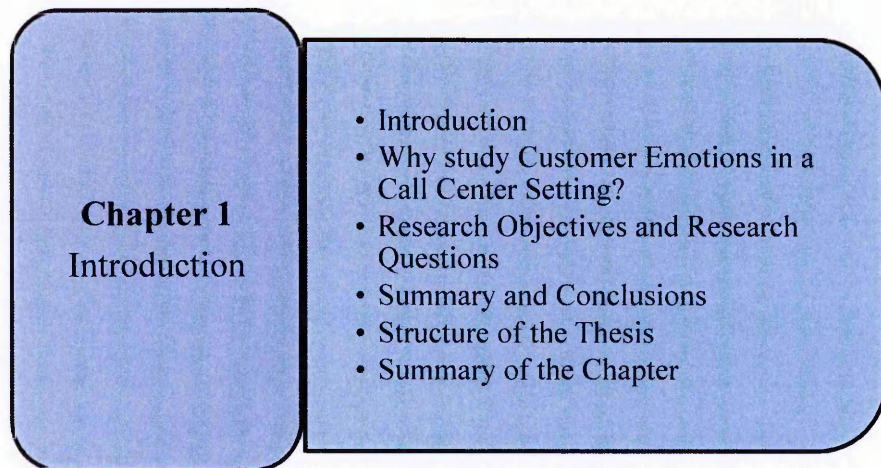
The third qualitative study was undertaken in order to understand the emotional process in a negative customer call center encounter with a focus on frustration, a major customer emotion in this context. The ‘emotional process’ refers to a theory-driven view of emotions where emotions and cognitive appraisals in response to an environmental trigger are inherently and subjectively mixed (Barrett et al., 2007; Elfenbein, 2007) to form a whole experience which has both adaptive and maladaptive customer outcomes.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the context and rationale of the study with the research questions and the intended contributions. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach and the procedures used for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 outlines the findings with a brief discussion of their significance, and Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings, the contributions along with some limitations and indications for future work.

This chapter introduces the domain and the scope of the thesis. The overall research question outlined above is divided into a series of research questions. The rationale for

each of these research questions is provided in terms of the contribution to knowledge, practice and theory that its answer will bring. A summary of the chapter structure is displayed in table 1.1.

*Table 1.1. Structure of Chapter 1*



## 1.2. Why study Customer Emotions in a Call Center Setting?

### Why study customer emotions in a call center setting?

- Customer emotions are poorly understood in a service which is an extremely common modern customer experience.
- Emotions theory suggests that the physical environment plays a role in the emotional process. In a call center encounter, physical and visual cues are absent. Customer emotions in a 'disembodied' experience have not been the subject of any particular previous study.
- In contrast to emotions in hedonic services customer emotions have not been considered to be of importance in utilitarian services such as call centers.
- In contrast to employee emotions customer emotions have not been the subject of study in call center encounters.
- The focus has been on industry-driven operational metrics for measures of performance rather than customer centered measures of perceptions, emotions and behavior.

Rappaport (1996) states that the modern and digital era of call centers started in 1974 in the United States with the use of Automated Call Distribution (ACD) which is central to the functioning of call centers. Since its beginning, the call center industry has expanded dramatically with a boom in the early 1990s especially in Europe (Russell, 2008).



Researchers argue that competition between service industries, the opportunity for high-volume, low-cost service delivery (Brown and Maxwell, 2002; Sergeant and Frenkel, 2000) via technological advances in integrated telephone computer (ITC) technology have all contributed to the growth in call centers (Burgers et al., 2000; Mukherjee and Malhotra, 2006). The rapid rise of call centers and their widespread use by consumers of all types of products and services leads to the first reason for carrying out this research, as outlined in the coming section.

#### **1.2.1. Call center interactions are one of the most commonly experienced service encounters**

In 1993, Hawcroft and Beckett (1993) suggested that call centers could totally replace person-to-person customer service interactions through branch networks in the future. To some extent, this prediction has come true, and call centers have become the new way to deliver services playing a crucial role as a primary customer interface for many organizations (Mukherjee and Malhotra, 2009). Today, they are seen as the first, if not the only way for companies to interact with their customers (Armistead et al., 2002; Dean, 2004; Lywood et al., 2009) and to develop customer contact in modern economies (Russell, 2008). The customer call center encounter is therefore one which is an unavoidable experience for the modern consumer and which needs to be understood if call centers desire to provide satisfactory service.

#### **1.2.2. Call center emotional experiences may differ from others because they are 'Remote' and 'Lean'**

Bitner (1992) categorizes servicescapes according to how rich the environmental cues are. Bitner (1992) defines them as 'elaborate', when there is a multitude of physical cues (such as theme parks) or 'lean' where physical input is more limited (e.g. a dry cleaner's). Further divisions of servicescapes are made according to whether they are self-service, comprise direct interactions with a service employee or are 'remote' (e.g. over the phone).

A call center service can be classified as a 'lean' (limited environmental cues) and 'remote' (no face to face interaction call center representative (CCR)).

Customers use a range of cues to assess products or services. One of the main aspects of services in comparison to products is that services may lack some intrinsic characteristics such as touch and taste that a food product for example would offer a consumer. Bitner (1992, p.63) in her study of the impact of servicescapes on customer behavior says that services '*generally afford fewer intrinsic cues on which to form beliefs about service quality, ...consumers ... tend to use extrinsic cues (such as the physical surroundings) to infer quality*'. From this perspective therefore, customers will use the physical surroundings where the service takes place in order to make judgments about a service. Call centers provide an 'intangible' service and are also inherently characterized by the absence of visual and physical cues (Bennington et al., 2000). In this sense, the cues available to form a perception of the service are not numerous. Formation of customer evaluation of the service delivery are therefore limited to interpersonal traits of the CCR during interaction by telephone (Burgers et al., 2000) as well as the more technological aspects of the service experienced by the customer such as the music, recorded messages and the degree of ease and speed with which they achieve their objectives (Bennington et al., 2000).

There are several authors who have noted that customers will find the emotional intangible content of a service encounter of importance (Krampf et al., 2003; Lemminck and Mattsson, 2002; Stauss and Mang, 1999), and this thesis suggests that the importance of emotions may be even higher when physical and visual cues are lacking because of the increased uncertainty induced in an environment which is less easy to apprehend directly. Uncertainty is a well-established cognitive appraisal component of the emotional experience (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985; Watson and Spence, 2007), and therefore the

nature of the service may lead customers to rely more heavily on their emotions to make a judgment about the service.

The aim of this thesis is not to compare physical versus disembodied services, but simply to point out that emotions may be of enhanced importance in this context.

### **1.2.3. The role of emotions has been relatively under-researched in utilitarian services**

There has been widespread research into emotions in other domains of marketing such as in the context of advertising (Batra and Ray, 1986; Havlena et al., 1989; Holbrook and Batra, 1987; Holbrook and Westwood, 1989; Labroo and Rucker, 2010; Teixeira et al., 2012) and branding (Brakus et al., 2009; Mehrabian and de Wetter, 1987; Rossiter and Bellman, 2012), but less so in the area of services.

Studies of emotions in services in the past have tended to investigate positive emotions in hedonic services (Arnould and Price, 1993; Bonnefoy-Claudet and Ghantous, 2013; Hosany and Prayag, 2013; Klaus and Maklan, 2011; Koenig-Lewis and Palmer, 2008; Pullman and Gross, 2004), whereas there are fewer studies of emotions (both positive and negative) in utilitarian settings such as call center services. This being the case, it is worth briefly outlining the differences between hedonic and utilitarian services.

A hedonic service refers to the provision of a service with the objective of achieving a pleasurable experience, whereas utilitarianism is linked to the objectives of fulfilling a functional purpose. Utilitarian services thus focus on the performance of the service itself (Hellen and Saaksjärvi, 2011; Voss et al., 2003). Although most services can be a combination of both (Batra and Athola, 1991), they can provide either more hedonic benefits or more utilitarian benefits (Okada, 2005). In a nutshell, hedonic services provide an affective experience with the service primarily based on pleasure, excitement and fulfillment (Babin et al., 1994). Examples of hedonic services could be theme parks, vacation resorts, and nightclubs (Jiang and Wang, 2006).

Utilitarian services are designed to meet needs that are more rational (Babin et al., 1994) and to provide consumers with 'certain functional utilities' or to 'solve practical problems such as car repairing, tax returns, banking or health care' (Jiang and Wang, 2006, p.212). Based on this description, it is suggested that a call center service can be classified as a utilitarian since the aim of call center is mainly to solve practical problems, to provide customer assistance and/or to cope with customers' complaints (Adomaitiene and Slatkeviciene, 2008; Armistead et al., 2002).

Research into emotions is scarce in the context of utilitarian settings such as call centers, perhaps because it is considered that cognitive assessments of service quality are more important (Spangenberg et al., 1997).

#### **1.2.4. Previous research in call centers has emphasized management issues**

There has been substantial research into call centers but this has been limited to: 1)

**Aspects of human resource management** (Budhwar et al., 2009; Callaghan and Thompson, 2002; Deery et al., 2010; Frenkel et al., 1998; Malhotra et al., 2007; Sergeant and Frenkel, 2000; Taylor et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 2003; Wallace et al., 2000); 2)

**Management of call center efficiency** (Armistead et al., 2002; Bordoloï, 2004; Budhwar et al., 2006; Halliden and Monks, 2005; Houlihan, 2002; Hutchinson et al., 2000; Kinnie et al., 2000); 3) **The links between employees' skills or attitude and customer loyalty,**

**satisfaction and service quality** (Burgers et al., 2000; Malhotra and Mukherjee, 2004;

Mukherjee and Malhotra, 2006; Dean, 2007) 4) **The design of call centers with impatient customers** (Ahghari and Balcioglu, 2009; Avramidis et al., 2004; Brandt and Brandt, 1999; Garnett et al., 2002; Mandelbaum and Momcilovic, 2008; Zohar et al., 2002).

### **1.2.5. Research in the domain of call center industry customers has emphasized cognitive performance metrics**

Call centers have used operational metrics to measure performance for so long that it has simply become a common assumption that these are valid indicators of customer satisfaction. Anton (1997), Feinberg et al. (2000; 2002) and Jaiswal (2008) suggest that the widespread use of these quantifiable measures (listed in table 1.2) may simply be because their measurement is simple to automate, thus generating easily understood statistics. Other authors also note that there is a concentration on quantity rather than quality (Gilmore, 2001; Robinson and Morley, 2006).

Feinberg et al. (2002, p.179) have stated that *'there are other things that might be important that we are not measuring'*.

This thesis suggests that one of the 'other' things is the emotional experience of the customer. The fact that customer emotions occur in a call center setting is often alluded to in the literature, for example Bennington et al. (2000) talk about 'irritants', Bennington et al. (2000), Unzicker (1999), and Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) all refer to the fact that 'anxiety' has an effect on consumer outcomes such as perception of waiting time and satisfaction. Whiting and Donthu (2006) refer to the 'agony' of being put on hold in the title, but do not go any further into investigating the emotions of customers. In spite of the fact that it is implicit in these articles that emotions are present, their role in the customer experience is not studied in any depth. This is illustrated in the study of Peevers et al. (2009) on perceptions of waiting time;

*'Businesses have used music to improve customers' experience while on hold, with the aim of reducing irritation and frustration, and making any otherwise unavoidable waiting a more pleasant experience'*. (Peevers et al., 2009, p.203)

The focus in Peevers et al.'s article (2009) is entirely on how the service can improve, rather than how the customers experience the encounter.

In summary, emotions are recognized to occur in call center encounters, but have not been the explicit subject of previous study. It is suggested that the reason for the lack of study in the area is because operational metrics are now embedded in industry practice through efficient automated measurement, and have been assumed to be adequate measures of service performance, *despite evidence that they do not capture important customer outcomes* such as satisfaction (Feinberg, 2000, 2002).

#### 1.2.6. Summary of the rationale for the thesis

Broadly speaking, in answer to the question, ‘why study emotions in a call center setting?’ the following gaps can be identified:

- In contrast to emotions in hedonic services **customer emotions have not been considered to be of importance in utilitarian services such as call centers,**
- In contrast to employee emotions **customer emotions have not been the subject of study in call center encounters,**
- The focus has been on **industry-driven operational metrics** for measures of performance rather than **customer centered** measures of perceptions, emotions and behavior.

The **overall intended contribution** of this thesis is therefore to study whether customer emotions play a role in utilitarian service settings, and to determine what elements underpin these emotions and their possible outcomes.

### 1.3. Research Objectives and Research Questions

#### 1.3.1. What are the emotions experienced by French call center customers?

##### Why identify context-specific emotions?

- Particular emotions are associated with their context and can be culturally bound.
- Subjective description with semantic content provides more accurate representation of the emotion than using a general emotions scale.

The first aim of this research was to explore whether the view implicit in some research in the call center literature (Bennington et al., 2000; Peevers et al., 2009; Unzicker, 1999) that customer emotions occur in a call center encounter was in fact true. Following this step, the particular emotions experienced by customers needed to be identified.

Previous research shows that emotions are context-specific (Richins, 1997) and therefore it is important in this research to identify the specific emotions that arise when customers have dealings with call centers. In this thesis the respondents in the survey carried out in study 2 were French, and dealt with one particular call center. Tronvoll (2011) in his study of emotions and complaints in the tourism industry concludes with a call to investigate emotions in other service industries, emphasizing that emotions can differ in distinct services.

The gap this study addresses is methodological, in that although general emotions scales are available in the literature, no scale specifically measuring the emotions experienced by call center customers exists.

The **first research objective** is therefore **to identify a specific set of emotions experienced by call center customers in France**. This leads to the first research question (RQ):

***Research Question 1***

***What are the emotions experienced by French call center customers?***

In order to answer this question, two investigative questions (IQ) are formulated. The first is exploratory in nature and was asked at the very beginning of this research in order to verify that customer emotions were of relevance in a call center encounter.

*IQ1.1. Do customers experience emotions during a call center encounter?*

The second question involved identifying the particular emotions experienced by customers *in their own words*.

*IQ1.2. What are the emotions reported by call center customers when recalling a recent encounter?*

**Description of Study 1:** Study 1 took an exploratory approach using focus groups and in-depth interviewing. The results of this phase (study 1) were used, a) to generate items for an emotions measurement scale in study 2 and b) to support the rationale for further qualitative data analysis carried out in study 3.

**Intended contribution 1:** To identify a set of emotions which are specific to French customers of call centers.

### 1.3.2. What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a customer call center encounter?

The second aim of this research is to test the relationships between call center customer positive and negative emotions on the one hand and satisfaction and loyalty on the other.

#### **Why study emotions, satisfaction and loyalty in a call center service setting?**

- Emotions are known to be linked to satisfaction and loyalty, but previous research focuses more on cognitive rather than emotional antecedents of satisfaction and loyalty in utilitarian service settings.

*More precisely:*

#### **Why study the link between emotions and satisfaction?**

- Antecedents of customer satisfaction are both cognitive and emotional, but the cognitive view is dominant in the call center industry, so the role of emotions in determining satisfaction is unknown.
- Emotions are known to play a role in predicting satisfaction in hedonic services, but the relationship has not been investigated to any great degree in utilitarian service settings.

#### **Why study the link between emotions and loyalty?**

- Satisfaction is not always a good predictor of loyalty, and emotions may be one of the reasons.
- The relationship between emotions and loyalty is not well understood, and has not been the subject of much empirical study in the utilitarian service sector.

#### **Why compare the impact of positive and negative emotions on satisfaction and loyalty?**

- Research in emotions shows that negative and positive emotions are distinct dimensions of the emotions construct.
- Positive and negative emotions have different and not necessarily predictable impacts on satisfaction and loyalty.



### **1.3.2.1. Introduction: customer emotions, satisfaction and loyalty**

To date, there has been substantial research on face-to face interactions in marketing services particularly in the consumer sector (Bitner et al., 1990; Crosby et al., 1990; Czepiel, 1990; Giebelhausen et al., 2014; Ma and Dubé, 2011; Paulin et al., 2000; Surprenant and Solomon, 1987) and there is a well-established body of knowledge on how service quality is evaluated (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Parasuraman et al., 1988), what influences customer satisfaction (Fournier and Mick, 1999) and what drives loyalty or behavioral intentions to a service provider (Caruana, 2002; Colgate and Stewart, 1998; Hocutt, 1998; Patterson and Spreng, 1997). A consistent observation has been that customer perception of the service encounter is a strong predictor of customer satisfaction and firm loyalty (Berry, 1983; Liljander and Mattsson, 2002).

Although there is extensive research on the nature of business-to-consumer relationships (Kong and Mayo, 1993; Westbrook and Peterson, 1998), and employees' perceptions of customer satisfaction, this thesis concentrates on service end-consumers.

Satisfaction and loyalty from a *customer* point of view in a call center setting have been overlooked (Bennington et al., 2000; Dean, 2002; 2007; Feinberg et al., 2000; Keiningham et al., 2006). As seen in the introduction, the role that emotions play in customer satisfaction and loyalty has been somewhat overlooked in the call center industry, and therefore the general research question posed for this study is:

#### ***Research Question 2***

***What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a customer call center encounter?***

This overall research question is divided into two subsidiary questions which are discussed and presented in the coming sections.

### **1.3.2.2. Antecedents of customer satisfaction in the call center industry take the cognitive ‘disconfirmation’ view**

One of the mainstream perspectives in the satisfaction literature is that satisfaction occurs as a result of a cognitive assessment of the gap between performance expectations and actual performance (e.g. Oliver, 1980; 1981; Tse and Wilton, 1988; Yi, 1990), which has been referred to as ‘disconfirmation’ since the experience disconfirms (or confirms) the expectation. This approach to conceptualizing and measuring satisfaction persists to this day and will be discussed fully in the literature review in chapter 2.

Another view of satisfaction is that it arises from both cognitive assessments and emotional components (Dubé and Menon, 2000; Fournier and Mick, 1999; Giese and Cote, 2000; Olsen, 2002; Richins, 1997). From this perspective cognitive assessments of expectations, performance, and disconfirmation lead to (or occur at the same time as) emotions which in turn lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction respectively (Homburg et al., 2006; Liljander and Strandvik, 1997; Oliver, 1993; Stauss and Neuhaus, 1997).

The call center industry appears to follow the ‘disconfirmation’ principle with the assumption that if it can deliver sufficient quality to meet objective or ‘cognitive’ expectations, customer satisfaction will automatically follow. The call center industry predominantly operates as an outsourced supplier, governed by service level agreements and key performance indicators. In this context, there is extensive reliance on behavioral indicators, for example length of time taken to answer a call (queue time) and average duration of call (Anton, 1997; Cleveland and Mayben, 1997; Feinberg et al., 2000, 2002; Jaiswal, 2008), which are illustrated in table 1.2. Where customer feedback is subsequently solicited about the quality of the call, this has tended to focus on cognitive evaluations of the waiting time, for example whether the operator provided the required information accurately and speedily (Dean, 2007).

**Table 1.2. Performance Measures used in the Call Center Industry**

Measures	Description
Average Speed of Answer (ASA)	Caller Waiting Time
Queue time	Amount of time caller is in the line for answer
Resolution of the first call	Percentage of callers who have satisfactory resolution of the first call
Abandonment rate	Percentages of callers who hang up or disconnect prior to answer
Average talk time	Total time caller was connected to telephone service representative
Adherence	Are agents in their seats as scheduled?
Average work time after call	Time needed to finish paper work, do research after the call itself has been completed?
Percentage of calls blocked	Percentage of callers who received a busy signal and could not even get into the queue
Time before abandoning	Average time caller held on before giving up in queue
Inbound calls	Number of inbound calls per CCR eight-hour shift
CCR turnover	The number of call center representatives who left in a period of time usually annually
Total calls	Number of total calls in the call center
Service levels	Calls answered in less than x seconds divided by the number of total calls

*Based on Anton (1997); Cleveland and Mayben, 1997; Feinberg et al. (2000; 2002); Jaiswal (2008)*

However, Feinberg et al. (2000; 2002) and Miciak and Desmarais (2001) found that these metrics are not positively associated with customer satisfaction. These operational measures cannot therefore be considered as relevant indicators of customer satisfaction.

This therefore leads to the question of whether emotions are the ‘missing link’. Can emotions provide a better explanation of satisfaction as suggested by Oliver (1993) than cognitive measures alone?

#### **1.3.2.3. The role of emotions in customer satisfaction is known, but under-researched in a utilitarian service setting**

As outlined previously, many authors suggest that emotions play an important role in customer satisfaction (Giese and Cote, 2000; Oliver, 1993; Westbrook and Oliver, 1991), particularly for hedonic experience services (Arnould and Price, 1993; Bonnefoy-Claudet and Ghantous, 2013; Hosany and Prayag, 2013; Koenig-Lewis and Palmer, 2008; Pullman and Gross, 2004). In contrast, there has been much less investigation of the emotions evoked by customers in utilitarian services (Del Rio et al., 2009; Dubé and Morgan, 1998; Gelbrich, 2010; Liljander and Strandvik, 1997) and the effect on satisfaction, and fewer still using empirical data from field studies. This may be due to the focus on cognitive satisfaction evaluations in utilitarian services such as call center services. However, a call center may have answered a caller's query (cognitive evaluation), but they may have been left feeling anxious or unhappy (affective evaluation).

#### **1.3.2.4. The gaps addressed in the study of the link between emotions and satisfaction**

In summary, the gaps addressed in this section of the thesis are as follows:

- Call centers implicitly follow the 'cognitive' view of satisfaction in that they measure satisfaction using performance metrics based on quantitative measures such as waiting time, number of calls etc... which are not customer-centered and do not predict satisfaction very well,
- Emotions are known to play a role in explaining satisfaction, but the relationship has not been investigated to any great degree in utilitarian service settings.

The **second research objective** is therefore **to test if customer emotions have an effect on satisfaction**. This leads to the second subsidiary research question 2.1 divided into two investigative questions:

### *Research Question 2.1*

*What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction in a customer call center encounter?*

*IQ2.1.1: What is the effect of positive customer emotions on satisfaction?*

*IQ2.1.2: What is the effect of negative customer emotions on satisfaction?*

#### **1.3.2.5. The role of emotions in determining loyalty**

The neglect of the role of emotions in satisfaction may be one of the reasons behind the extensive evidence that satisfaction is not always a good predictor of whether a customer will continue in a relationship with an organization (Brady and Cronin, 2001). While some prediction error may arise from situational factors, a more serious challenge is based on recognition that **the explanation of satisfaction has traditionally been cognitive in nature, and does not sufficiently take account of affect** (Bigné et al., 2008).

In addition, the relationship between emotions and loyalty is not one which has been researched to any great degree in the literature on utilitarian services (see literature review in chapter 2) for similar reasons as given for satisfaction in that emotions have not thought to be highly relevant in services providing ordinary utilitarian services.

If traditional cognitive measures of satisfaction alone do not adequately predict loyalty, the question arises as to whether emotions are a significant predictor of loyalty, leading to the **third research objective** which is **to test whether emotions and satisfaction have an effect on loyalty**. This leads to the research question 2.2 divided into three investigative questions (IQ):

### *Research Question 2.2*

*What is the effect of emotions and satisfaction on loyalty in a customer call center encounter?*

*IQ2.2.1: What is the effect of positive customer emotions on loyalty?*

*IQ2.2.2: What is the effect of negative customer emotions on loyalty?*

*IQ2.2.3: What is the effect of satisfaction on loyalty?*

#### **1.3.2.6. The effect of positive and negative emotions on satisfaction and loyalty is distinct**

Further to research questions 2.1 and 2.2, it is worth mentioning that there are several theoretically distinct approaches to conceptualizing and measuring emotions. This issue will be discussed fully in chapter 2 in the literature review. For the present it suffices to indicate that many authors (Dubé and Morgan, 1998; Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Phillips and Baumgartner, 2002; Watson et al., 1988) follow the view that positive and negative emotions can be considered as two separate dimensions of the same emotions construct in line with Izard (1977) and Oliver (1993).

#### **1.3.2.7. The gaps addressed in the study of the link between emotions and loyalty**

It is widely recognized by marketing researchers that negative experiences (and therefore logically speaking negative emotions) have more impact on loyalty than positive experiences. One of the founding articles in this area was by Anderson (1998) who found empirical support for the hypothesis that effect of dissatisfaction on negative word-of-mouth was stronger than that of satisfaction on positive word-of-mouth. When the literature on the link between emotions and loyalty was investigated however, it appears that the relative impact of positive and negative emotions on loyalty has scarcely been empirically tested. In the few studies where this has been tested, no explicit attention was paid to a comparison of effects. This oversight may be because the relationship seems obvious, or alternatively that further literature research is necessary. In any case, the lack of easily accessible results in this area suggests that this finding should provide an interesting contribution to a widely assumed and intuitive link.

Overall, this part of the study addresses the following gaps:

- Research in emotions shows that negative and positive emotions are distinct dimensions of the emotions construct,
- Positive and negative emotions have different and not necessarily predictable impacts on satisfaction and loyalty.

The **fourth research objective** is therefore **to establish the relative effects of positive and negative emotions on customer loyalty.**

#### **1.3.2.8. Description of study 2**

In order to address research questions 2.1 and 2.2 a survey of 1440 French customers of a single call center is effected, and the data analysed. This study tests the relationships between all constructs, and tests the hypotheses to be developed in the literature review.

**Intended Contribution 2:** To test the relationships between emotions, satisfaction and loyalty.

**Intended Contribution 3:** To test the relative effect of negative and positive emotions on loyalty.

#### **1.3.3. The customer emotional process in a call center encounter**

*'If call centers are the way of future, we need to better understand the call center experience of the customer' Bennington et al. (2000, p.165).*

##### **Why study the customer emotional process?**

- The concept of emotional process provides a better theoretical basis than the concept of 'emotions' alone for studying and understanding the customer emotional experience.
- Emotions have been conceptualized as separate from cognitive appraisals of services, and the emotional experience combining appraisals and emotions and their customer outcomes has not been researched.



#### **1.3.3.1. The concept of emotional process provides a better basis for understanding the role of emotions in customer call center encounters than the concept of 'emotions' alone**

Study 1 and study 2 in this thesis comprise an exploratory qualitative phase and a quantitative survey-based stage. The results confirm that emotions are of prime importance in call center encounters, and provide evidence that emotions can predict customer satisfaction and loyalty.

On further examination of the data collected, coupled with considerations of theory, in particular appraisal theory (Frijda, 1968; Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 1982; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985; Watson and Spence, 2007), it was decided to proceed with an additional round of data collection.

The reasons for this phase of data collection are as follows. Firstly, the data collected and analysed in studies 1 and 2 shows a) which emotions occur in a call center encounter, and b) that those emotions affect customer satisfaction and loyalty, but do not provide sufficient insight into *which particular elements in a call center encounter underpin those emotions*. This is of prime importance if any recommendations for practice are to be made.

Secondly, two theoretical difficulties are identified which can be circumvented by using qualitative data collection with a theoretical framework (appraisal theory) to guide analysis. The first of these concerns the nature and measurement of satisfaction in any study of emotions.

#### **1.3.3.2. The nature and measurement of satisfaction, cognitive vs. affective**

As discussed previously, some authors consider satisfaction as composed of both affective and cognitive dimensions (see. Oliver, 1993 for an overview), and its measurement in the consumer literature can sometimes be on a cognitive basis (performance-expectations gap) or on a purely affective basis (e.g. Arnould and Price, 1993) using words such as “*I feel satisfied*” with various attributes of an experience. Alternatively, measurement of



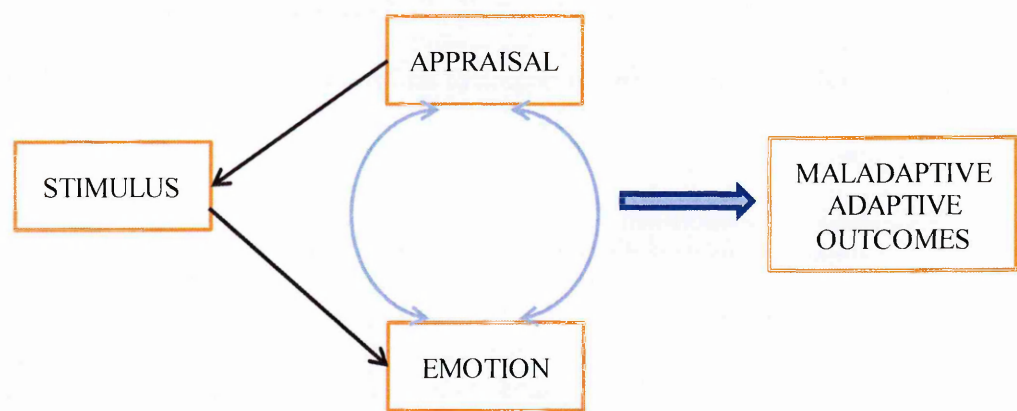
satisfaction can encompass both (e.g. Westbrook, 1980). Rust and Chung (2006) have also made the point that in general, satisfaction measures are highly intercorrelated, so in general, the confounding of cognitive and emotional elements of satisfaction should not matter.

Because this thesis is about consumer emotions however, the question could arise as to whether some of the correlation observed between satisfaction and positive emotions might be based on the fact that respondents of a questionnaire could interpret a satisfaction item on a questionnaire as a question about their emotions. In parallel, some consumer emotions research includes satisfaction as an emotion (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005) and some does not (e.g. Richins, 1997). This matter is further discussed in the literature review in chapter 2.

#### **1.3.3.3. Emotions and cognitive appraisals combine to form the emotional process**

The second theoretical concern is also about possible conceptual overlaps, this time between cognitive appraisals of a stimulus and emotion, and between the emotion and its outcome. Cognitive appraisal theory (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985; Watson and Spence, 2007) defines several dimensions along which an event or stimulus can be appraised in the experience of emotion. Broadly speaking these are goal desirability (how important or urgent is the goal to be achieved), fairness (is the event just, or morally right), control and responsibility (who or what controls the event and was the action intentional) and uncertainty (how certain is the person about the process or the goal being reached). The literature review in chapter 2 shows that a popular approach to emotions in the psychology (Barrett et al., 2007) and organizational literature (Elfenbein, 2007) prefers not to treat emotions in a 'vacuum' and that the cognitive appraisals and emotions that occur in response to stimulus interact in an emotional process. This conceptualization is illustrated in figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1. The Emotional Process



The theoretical perspective outlined above suggests that a **process** describes an emotional experience better than the notion used by some authors (e.g. Del Rio et al, 2009; Gelbrich, 2010) that emotions happen in response to a cognitive appraisal and then produce a behavioral response, or that emotions moderate the appraisal-behaviour link as illustrated in figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2. Illustration of the ‘cause-effect’ view



This view of the emotional process leads to the realization that when recounting or assessing experiences, people in general (and participants in study 1 in particular) can use phrases like ‘*I felt powerless*’ or ‘*I felt discouraged*’ to describe their feelings. These descriptions have high validity since they express exactly what the person felt, but possess lower value during a theoretically based analysis exercise, where ‘powerlessness’ is a clear example of one of the well-accepted cognitive appraisal dimensions of (reduced) control (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985).

#### **1.3.3.4. Frustration is a dominant emotion in a call center encounter**

Customer frustration has been implicitly or explicitly noted as present in previous research in utilitarian service settings (Bennington, 2000; Gelbrich, 2010; Guchait and Namasivayam, 2012; Peevers et al., 2009; Tronvoll, 2011), but has not been the subject of any theoretical development, unlike other emotions such as anger.

In addition, this emotion is identified in studies 1, 2 and 3 in this thesis as being of importance, and can be considered to be sufficiently theoretically distinct from cognitive appraisal elements, (unlike e.g. 'powerlessness', another emotion frequently reported) to deserve further investigation.

Based on these observations, an intended theoretical contribution of this thesis was to undertake the characterization of frustration through its appraisal dimensions, and to suggest in line with the functionalist view of emotions (Frijda, 1986) that it can result in both positive and negative outcomes depending on contextual factors. The full conceptualization of frustration is discussed in the literature review in chapter 2.

This approach means that potential recommendations to call centers can be made with respect to how frustration can be dealt with in order to ensure adaptive rather than maladaptive outcomes in customers.

#### **1.3.3.5. The gaps addressed in the study of the emotional experience**

From the preceding discussion it can be seen that from a theoretical perspective, the study of the emotional process will provide more valid and valuable results than attempting to impose a cause-effect separation of cognitive appraisals and emotions. The gaps are therefore:

- Emotions have been conceptualized as separate from cognitive appraisals of services. The emotional process which combines cognitive appraisals **and** emotions together with their customer outcomes has not been researched,

- The theoretical characterization of frustration has not previously been attempted, in contrast to other emotions such as anger.

The **fifth research objective** is therefore **to describe the customer emotional experience in a call center setting**. The research question posed for this part is:

***Research Question 3***

***What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter?***

This research question was divided into three investigative questions designed to map the emotional process from before the call until after the call as follows:

*IQ3.1: What are the factors that give rise to emotions before calling a call center?*

*IQ3.2: What are the elements during a call center encounter that underpin the emotion of frustration?*

*IQ3.3: What are the elements that trigger adaptive or maladaptive responses to frustration after a call center encounter?*

#### **1.3.3.6. Description of study 3**

In this study 133 students who have had a negative experience with a call center take part in 33 focus groups in a study carried out from September 2013 to December 2014.

Participants recount their experiences and the transcripts are subsequently analysed to provide the answers to the research question posed.

**Intended Contribution 4:** To demonstrate through empirical data collection and analysis to the theory that emotions and appraisals are inseparable and form the emotional process.

**Intended Contribution 5:** To develop the theoretical characterization of frustration and its adaptive and maladaptive outcomes through empirical data collection and analysis and a review of the literature.

#### **1.4. Summary and Conclusions**

The research question asked in this thesis is:

*What is the role of customer emotions in a call center setting?*

In the preceding discussion, three broad research questions and five general intended contributions have been developed and justified to answer this question in terms of how they are intended to contribute to filling gaps in knowledge and theory.

Table 1.3 provides a summary of the overall research gaps, research question and intended contribution for the whole thesis as well as a summary of specific research gaps, research questions and intended contributions for each study.

**Table 1.3. Research Gaps, Research Questions and Intended Contributions**

Overall Research Gaps	Overall Research Question	Overall Intended Contribution
<p>Customer emotions have not been considered to be of importance in utilitarian services such as call centers</p> <p>The focus has been on industry-driven operational metrics and cognitive measures of antecedents of satisfaction</p>	<p><b>What is the role of customer emotions in a call center setting?</b></p>	<p>To study whether customer emotions play a role in utilitarian service settings, and to determine what elements underpin these emotions and their possible outcomes</p>
Research Gaps	Research Questions	Intended Contributions
<p>1. Particular emotions are associated with their context and can be culturally bound</p> <p>2. Subjective description with semantic content provides more accurate representation of the emotion than using a general emotions scale</p>	<p>1. What are the emotions experienced by call center customers?</p>	<p>1. To identify a set of emotions which are specific to French customers of call centers</p>
<p>3. Antecedents of customer satisfaction are both cognitive and emotional, but the cognitive view is dominant in the call center industry, so the role of emotions in determining satisfaction is unknown</p> <p>4. Emotions are known to play a role in predicting satisfaction in hedonic services, but the relationship has not been investigated to any great degree in utilitarian service settings</p> <p>5. Satisfaction is not always a good predictor of loyalty, and emotions may be one of the reasons</p> <p>6. The relationship between emotions and loyalty is not well understood, and has not been the subject of much empirical study in the utilitarian service sector</p> <p>7. Research in emotions shows that negative and positive emotions are distinct dimensions of the emotions construct</p> <p>8. Positive and negative emotions have different and not necessarily predictable impacts on satisfaction and loyalty</p>	<p>2. What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a customer call center encounter?</p>	<p>2. To test the relationships between emotions, satisfaction and loyalty</p> <p>3. To test the relative effect of negative and positive emotions on loyalty</p>
<p>9. Emotions have been conceptualized as separate from cognitive appraisals of services, and the emotional experience combining appraisals and emotions and their customer outcomes has not been researched</p> <p>10. Frustration is an emotion widely experienced in a call center setting but it has not been characterized theoretically in the consumer literature</p>	<p>3. What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter?</p>	<p>4. To contribute through empirical data collection and analysis to the theory that emotions and appraisals are inseparable and form the emotional experience</p> <p>5. To develop the theoretical characterization of frustration and its adaptive and maladaptive outcomes through empirical data collection and analysis and a review of the literature</p>

## 1.5. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is made up of five chapters and is therefore in line with the recommendations made by Love (2002). The five sections include the introduction, the literature review, the justifications for paradigm and methodology, the analysis of data and finally the conclusions and implications. The thesis is structured as follows:

**Chapter 1** has introduced the rationale for the research, the problem statement, the research objectives and the major intended contributions of the thesis.

**Chapter 2** introduces the theoretical background to the research problem under study, the role of customer emotions in a call center setting. The review is organized in three main sections. First a discussion of the main schools of thought concerning the nature of emotions is presented. Second a review of the relationships between emotions, satisfaction and loyalty is provided. Finally, an in-depth theoretical consideration of frustration is provided.

This thesis involves **three empirical studies**. The first study (study 1) is an exploratory phase involving qualitative data collection and analysis for the building of a measurement scale. Study 2 is a descriptive phase where quantitative data is collected by means of a survey and analyzed using statistical methods for testing hypotheses. Study 3 is a follow-up qualitative study which offers further insight into the constructs and their relationships investigated in part 2 through a consideration of the emotional process. **Chapter 3** involves the methodological approach and the philosophical considerations underpinning the research design for the three empirical studies. It also provides methodological justifications and descriptions of procedures across the three studies.

**Chapter 4** presents the findings of the three studies carried out for this thesis. Each section is accompanied by a short discussion summarizing the results and providing any relevant points that need highlighting. A final overall view ends the chapter.

A fuller discussion of the results and their implications is provided in chapter 5. **Chapter 5** discusses the results in the context of previous research in order to provide a solid basis for theoretical, managerial and empirical contributions. Finally, the contributions of the thesis, the limitations and areas for future research are discussed.

### **1.6. Summary of the Chapter**

Chapter 1 aimed to provide an overview of the thesis. It started with an introduction to the rationale for the thesis. Then it presented the research objectives and research questions together with the general intended contributions. It concluded with a presentation of the structure of the thesis.

The next chapter, Chapter 2, presents the relevant theoretical background that underpins this research investigation.



# Chapter 2. Literature Review

Chapter 1 Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rationale for Studying Emotions in a Call Center Setting</li><li>• Research Objectives and Research Questions</li><li>• Summary and Conclusions</li><li>• Structure of the Thesis</li></ul>
Chapter 2 Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emotions</li><li>• Appraisal Theory</li><li>• The Appraisal-Tendency Framework</li><li>• Emotions, Satisfaction and Loyalty</li><li>• The Frustration Experience</li></ul>
Chapter 3 The Methodological Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pragmatism</li><li>• Mixed-Methods Approach</li><li>• Justifications for the Methodology</li><li>• Methodology for Study 1, Study 2 and Study 3: Aims, procedures, participants, analysis techniques and implications for later phases</li></ul>
Chapter 4 Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data Analysis</li><li>• Findings</li><li>• Summary of the Findings and Discussion</li></ul>
Chapter 5 General Discussion and Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall Discussion of the Findings</li><li>• Theoretical and Managerial Implications</li><li>• Limitations</li><li>• Areas for Future Research</li><li>• Conclusion</li></ul>

## 2.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the theoretical background to the research problem under study, the role of customer emotions in a call center setting. The review is organized in three main sections. First the main schools of thought concerning the nature of emotions are discussed, with a consideration of a) how emotions have been classified in the literature, b) the purpose or effects of emotions and c) the emotional experience. The second section considers how emotions have been linked to satisfaction and loyalty, two central constructs investigated in this thesis.

Two points relevant to this thesis that the review of the emotions literature reveals are a) that when emotions are clustered together as a single construct, important details can be lost in understanding the emotional experience (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Lazarus, 1991), and b) emotions are context specific (Barrett et al., 2007; Richins, 1997).

The literature, along with findings from this thesis show that frustration is one of the dominant customer emotions in a call center encounter, so section 3 of this literature review provides an in-depth theoretical consideration of frustration.

Table 2.1 provides a summary of the chapter structure.

**Table 2.1. Structure of Chapter 2**

<b>Chapter 2</b> Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Emotions</li><li>• Emotions, Satisfaction and Loyalty</li><li>• The Frustration Experience</li><li>• Summary of the Chapter</li></ul>
--	--

## **2.2. Emotions**

Interest in the nature of emotions, their function and purpose has existed for a long time. Aristotle provided a set of fundamental emotions and described a) the personal conditions or circumstances that give rise to the feeling, b) the people who elicit or do not elicit the feeling and c) the occasions where the feelings towards those people occur (Cooper, 1996). Since then the scientific and psychological literature has studied and discussed emotions in a wide range of literature (see Lazarus, 1991 for an overview) and have suggested various categorization schemes of emotions, as well as theory as to how emotions arise and their purpose. In the last two decades the importance of emotions in the marketing and consumer literature has also become more important, and the role of emotions in various consumer settings has been investigated (see Nyer, 1997; Oliver, 1993; Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, 2010; Westbrook and Oliver, 1991; White, 2010).

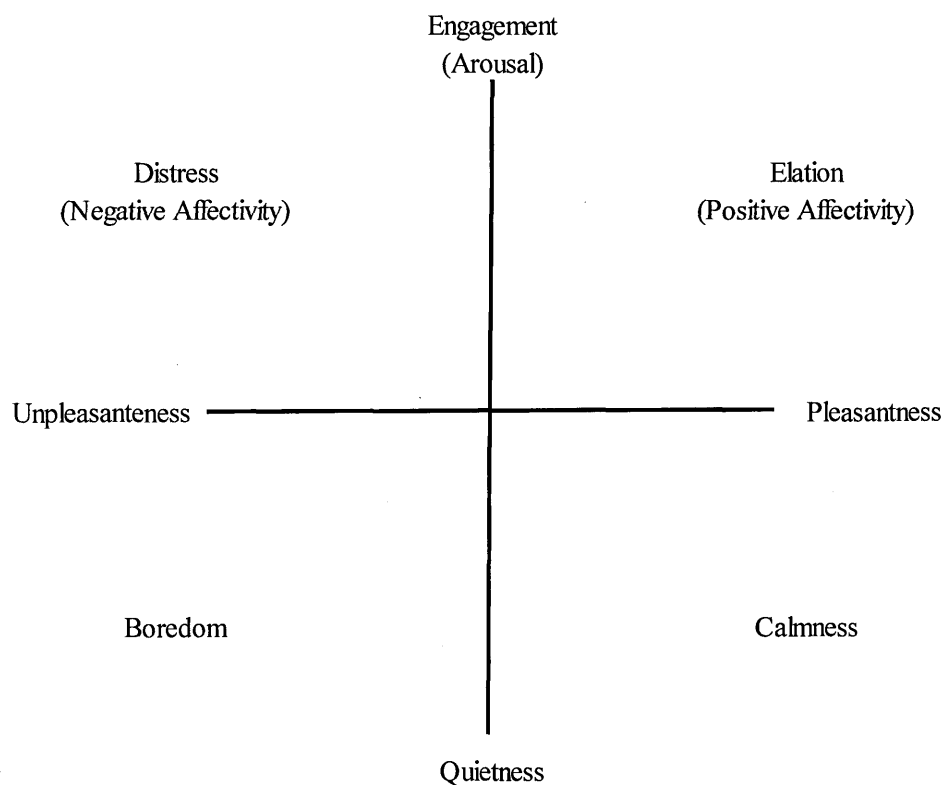
### **2.2.1. Categorization of emotions**

One type of classification method for emotions categorizes them along some dimension which describes a characteristic common to those emotions. The first characteristic that is generally accepted is the pleasantness of the emotion, sometimes termed valence (e.g. Babin et al., 1998; Lazarus, 1991). In this scheme emotions are categorized as pleasant or unpleasant and can be assessed in terms of the degree of the pleasantness of the experience. Babin et al. (1998) pointed out that there appear to be two concepts of emotion valence in the marketing literature, one which assumes that emotions range from unpleasant to pleasant on a bipolar scale, and another that treats positive and negative emotions as separate, independent dimensions. There has been substantial empirical and theoretical support for the latter view (Dubé and Morgan, 1998; Phillips and Baumgartner, 2002; Watson et al., 1988) and this thesis follows this view that positive and negative emotions can be considered as two separate dimensions of the same emotions construct in line with Izard (1977) and Oliver (1993).

The second dimension along which emotions are characterized is arousal (Russell, 1980; Russell, 2009), also called activation level (De Dreu et al., 2008). Arousal refers to the intensity associated with the experience of each emotion. Some emotions are positive and deactivating (e.g. relaxed), inasmuch as others are positive and activating (e.g. happy). Similarly, some emotions are negative and deactivating (e.g. sad), whereas others are negative and activating (e.g. anger).

Based on these two fundamental dimensions, a framework fairly widely used in the literature is the Pleasure Arousal Dominance (PAD) framework suggested by (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Russell, 1980) illustrated below in figure 2.1. The authors also suggested submissiveness and dominance as a third dimension, similar to the control dimension in appraisal theory discussed in section 2.2.3 further on in this thesis.

**Figure 2.1. The Pleasure Arousal Dominance Framework**



*From Mano and Oliver (1993, p.453)*

Further to the classification according to dimensions, emotions researchers have also widely studied discrete emotions. It has been repeatedly remarked that emotions that could be perceived as identical or similar when viewed in terms of pleasantness or arousal are obviously different, for example anger and fear (e.g. Barrett et al., 2007; Izard, 1977). Richins (1997) provided a broad set of consumer emotions based on Izard's (1977) early work comprising 16 categories containing 43 emotions plus an 'other' category. Examples include categories such as 'anger', 'joy', 'fear'. The anger category for example, contains the discrete emotions of anger, frustration and irritation. Laros and Steenkamp (2005) in a later study reduced these into two structural dimensions, positive and negative emotions each subdivided into four 'basic' emotions (anger, fear, sadness and shame vs. contentment, happiness, love and pride) each of which in turn contain a number of similar emotions (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Richins, 1997).

The classification of emotions, therefore, is still an area of research that continues today with no single model emerging as definitively superior to the others. It is useful therefore to look at other ways of defining emotions beyond their classification into groups and to consider the function of emotions.

### **2.2.2. Functionalist view of emotions and the emotional process**

The functionalist view of emotions (Barrett et al., 2007; Frijda, 1986; Keltner and Haidt, 1999; Lazarus, 1991) highlights the notion that emotions occur for a purpose. The purpose can be fundamental as illustrated in the 'fight or flight' mechanism, where basic emotions such as fear or anger occur in an organism in reaction to danger or threat. The emotion can also serve a more complex social objective such as shame leading a person to conform to social rules. Regulatory focus theory suggests that emotional states are driven by two motivational orientations - promotion and prevention focus - that define fundamentally different cognitive processing styles (Higgins, 1997; Idson et al., 2000).

Emotions such as worry, and boredom, have a prevention focus orientation and are therefore concerned with responsibilities and safety, which trigger action tendencies that aim to avoid negative stimuli and related situations (Brockner and Higgins, 2001; Carver, 2004). Both positive and negative emotions are associated with a promotion focus, such as happiness or anger trigger action tendencies with an approach orientation aimed at solving problem (Carver, 2004; Higgins, 1997; 2001; 2006).

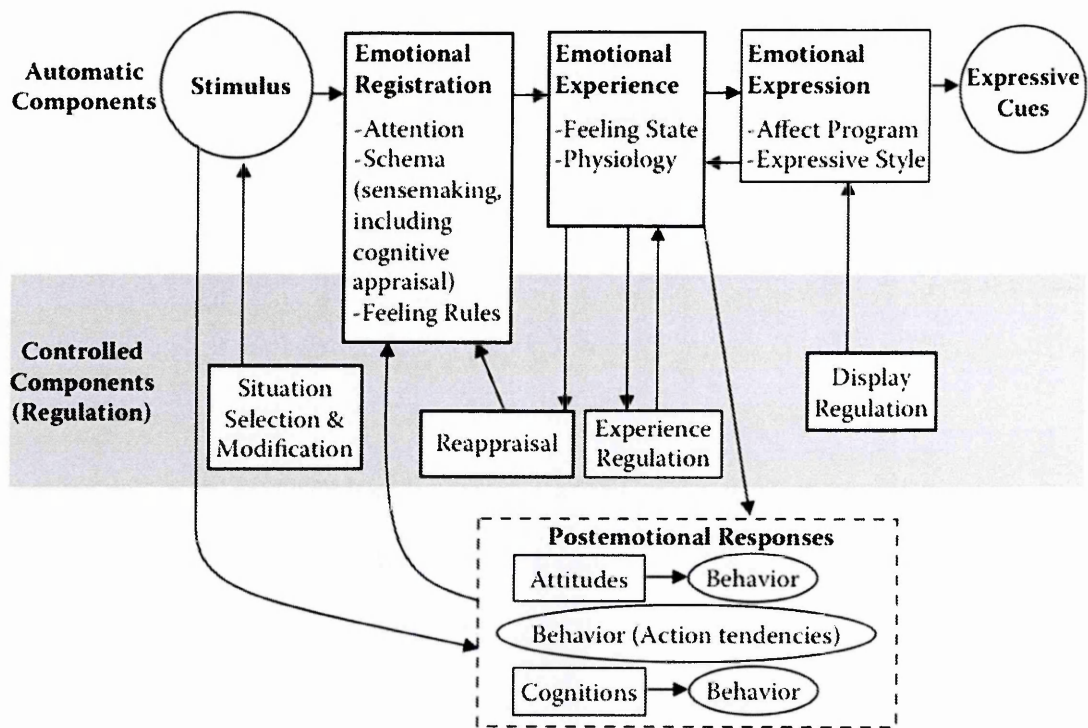
Since the function of an emotion depends on the context, it is important to take into account environmental factors. A dominant perspective on emotions suggests that they occur in response to the meaning attributed to a situation, event or stimulus by the observer (Barrett et al., 2007; Elfenbein, 2007; Frijda, 1988; Lazarus, 1991; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985), in other words, trying to link a particular incident or stimulus to an emotion or set of emotions is meaningless without understanding how the person experiencing the event perceives or appraises that event.

The idea that an emotion does not occur alone, and that it can arise from the appraisal and reappraisal of a stimulus in a particular environment has been termed the emotional process. A recent review of emotions in organizations (Elfenbein, 2007) provides an overview of the psychology literature in this domain and attempts to move away from the difficulty of defining whether a) a stimulus causes an emotion, or b) the cognitive appraisal of a stimulus causes the emotion. Elfenbein's (2007) proposed framework, based on the work of Brunswik (1955), Buck (1984), Ekman (1972), Fridlund (1994), Frijda (1986), Frijda and Mesquita, (1994), Gross (2001), Scherer (1984; 1995), Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), presents the notion that cognition and emotion occur together in response to a stimulus, and then other factors such as personality, environmental factors, emotional regulation skills (Gross, 1998a) and, social rules among others moderate the initial emotional registration (which includes appraisal) leading to longer term attitudes, cognition and behavior. Each time an emotional experience occurs, these longer term



factors such as attitude or cognition are used again and affect the emotional response the second or third time around. This is illustrated in figure 2.2 below.

**Figure 2.2. Integrated Intrapersonal Process Framework for Emotions in Organizations**



From Elfenbein (2007, p.318)

Barrett et al. (2007) in their extensive review of the experience of emotion make several points about the link between emotions, the person and the context which are worth emphasizing. Firstly they state that emotions are subjective, and need to be reported subjectively. They state “To know what emotion feels like, it is necessary to ask people what they experience.” (Barrett et al., 2007, p.376).

The second point that can be emphasized is that they explicitly state that emotions are directly related to a particular context which is appraised and that the appraisal is not a cause, but rather part of a mental representation of the emotional experience “Appraisals, when they are treated as descriptions (rather than causes) of situated meaning (e.g., Clore and Ortony, 2000; Frijda, 2006; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985), provide the best available

*evidence for mapping the experience of a situation that occurs in a mental representation of emotion.*” (Barrett et al., 2007, p.380).

The view of emotion as a process rather than a cause-effect model is the perspective taken in this study, in that it is not assumed that an appraisal causes the emotion, but rather that emotions and cognitive appraisals interact in a dynamic process and lead to outcomes that can be affective or behavioral in nature. This will be further discussed in section 2.4.3.

### **2.2.3. Appraisal theory**

Appraisal theory looks at how a stimulus or an event is evaluated cognitively. The occurrence can be appraised along several dimensions which allow the person to assess the significance of the event (Elfenbein, 2007; Frijda, 1968; Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 1982; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). The number and exact nature of these dimensions has been the subject of many discussions, but can broadly speaking be defined as follows. The first is outcome desirability (including pleasantness) which is concerned with the importance or the relevance of the goal that the person wants to reach. An important or urgent goal, and whether that goal is blocked or not will elicit different emotions than if the person's goal is less important. The second is attentional activity; i.e. should one approach, avoid or ignore the event?

Appraisals of how much attention the situation deserves or needs will accompany different emotions. The emotion can alert the individual that attention is needed, or in contrast cognitive assessments of the event can give rise to heightened emotion preparing the person to act.

The third is the anticipated effort, different emotions occur if the person needs to or believes that they have to act to solve a problem. Fourth is agency which refers to whether a human, the self or another caused the event, this is sometimes termed responsibility. Another important dimension is control – who or what controls the event (self, other or circumstance/no one), and certainty (can the event be understood and/or predicted). Other



dimensions are perceived goal obstruction and fairness or adherence to norms (Elfenbein, 2007; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985).

As discussed before, the evaluations along the appraisal dimensions are attributed by the person experiencing the event and are highly dependent on context and the interpretation of the meaning of the occurrence. For example listening to music can under normal circumstances be appraised as a highly pleasant experience – a desirable goal - but we will see that this is not so while waiting on the line in the context of a call center encounter. Appraisal theory is widely used in the study of emotions and has been suggested as a useful tool for understanding consumer emotions (Watson and Spence, 2007).

#### **2.2.4. The Appraisal-Tendency Framework**

Although the aim of this thesis is to study the effect on positive vs. negative emotions on satisfaction and loyalty, it is worth addressing the Appraisal-Tendency Framework (ATF) (Han et al., 2007; Lerner and Keltner, 2000, 2001).

The ATF is an alternative way to understand the influence of affect on judgment and choice. Contrary to the majority of studies which adopt a valence-based approach, the appraisal-tendency approach discusses the influence of specific - and not global - emotions of the same valence (e.g. anger, fear and sadness) on judgment and choice, and suggests that the underlying appraisal dimensions influence the effect of emotions (Lerner and Keltner, 2000, 2001).

Drawing on the appraisal-tendency approach, Lerner and Keltner (2000) found that although fear and anger are emotions of the same valence (e.g. negative emotions), they have different effects on risk assessment. Fear was positively associated with perceived risk while anger was negatively correlated with perceived risk. Therefore each emotion has a specific influence on judgment based on their differences in appraisals of uncertainty and control. However, research using the valence-based approach found that fear and anger both have a negative effect on risk perception (Johnson and Tversky, 1983; Wright and

Bower, 1992). Findings from Lerner and Keltner (2000) therefore indicate that the appraisal-tendency approach provide thorough results on whether and how negative emotions influence judgment.

Although the ATF approach offers a promising avenue for emotion research it does not serve the purpose of this study.

### **2.2.5. Summary**

The review of the main schools of thought in the emotions literature has shown firstly that emotions can be conceptualized along the general dimensions of positive and negative emotions (Babin et al., 1998; Izard, 1977) and arousal or activation (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Drawing on Izard (1977) the first two studies carried out in this thesis consider positive and negative emotions as two independent dimensions of the general emotions construct. Secondly, the idea that emotions are intrinsically bound to contextual meaning (Lazarus, 1991) and occur as discrete emotions depending on the appraisal of the stimulus in their environment is also relevant to this thesis which aims to understand customer emotions in a call center setting. The third study carried out for this thesis thus investigates negative emotions, in particular frustration in a particular context using appraisal theory as its theoretical basis. In section 3 of the literature review, the appraisal dimensions linked to frustration will be discussed for this purpose.

In the next section the literature linking emotions, satisfaction and loyalty is discussed with the aim of generating the hypotheses to be tested in the first quantitative study.

## **2.3. Emotions, Satisfaction and Loyalty**

### **2.3.1. Understanding the concept of satisfaction**

The definition of satisfaction in the consumer psychology and the marketing literature remains unclear in the context of a discussion of emotions. One reason for the lack of clarity is that satisfaction is conceptualized as an outcome of product or service

**assessment** and/or an **emotion** of the consumer, but at the same time that outcome (satisfaction) is itself measured using dimensions similar to its antecedents.

Broadly speaking there are three main conceptualizations of satisfaction. One school of thought suggests that satisfaction is a result of a cognitive assessment of whether a consumption goal was achieved or not. If the goal was not reached dissatisfaction occurs. If the goal is achieved satisfaction occurs (Garbarino and Johnson, 2001; Heitmann et al., 2007; Myers, 1991; Olshavsky and Spreng 1989; Swan and Combs, 1976; Westbrook and Reilly, 1983). For example a customer who wants to have their telephone repaired will be satisfied if the repair takes place.

Going beyond a simple binary achieved/not achieved consideration, there is the concept of the degree to which goal is achieved. Here, satisfaction occurs as the outcome of a cognitive assessment of the gap between performance expectations and actual performance (e.g. Oliver, 1980; 1981; Orsingher and Marzocchi, 2003; Orsingher et al., 2011; Tse and Wilton, 1988; Yi, 1990), similar to concepts used in early service quality models (Parasuraman et al., 1988). If performance falls short of expectations then dissatisfaction occurs. If performance meets expectations satisfaction is achieved, if performance surpasses expectations satisfaction also occurs, sometimes conceptualized as ‘delight’ (Voss et al., 1998). For example if a customer wants their telephone to be repaired they will be dissatisfied if it takes longer or is more expensive than they expected, even if their final goal, the repair, is reached.

One of the problems with this conceptualization pointed out by Spreng et al. (1996) is that it leads to inconsistencies such as positive satisfaction outcomes being predicted in cases of customers with low expectations receiving poor service. The authors suggest differentiating ‘expectations’ from ‘desires’ to overcome this inconsistency in that even if the customer expects and receives poor service – i.e. there is no gap – they desire good service, and so are dissatisfied.

The second school of thought proposes that satisfaction is an outcome of both emotional and cognitive assessments, sometimes termed emotional and cognitive ‘responses’ (Dubé and Menon, 2000; Fournier and Mick, 1999; Giese and Cote, 2000; Olsen, 2002; Richins, 1997). So in addition to cognitive assessments of expectations, performance, and disconfirmation, the consumer experiences positive or negative emotions (Homburg et al., 2006; Oliver, 1993) which lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction respectively.

The third body of research into satisfaction introduces the idea of satisfaction arising from other cognitive sources such as assessments of fairness, equity or perceived justice (Oliver and Swan, 1989; Schoefer, 2008; Smith et al., 1999). Recently justice dimensions have been used as a direct measure of satisfaction termed satisfaction strength, and coupled with another dimension, ‘satisfaction level’ conceptualized as the level of uncertainty associated with the satisfaction strength (Chandrashekaran et al., 2007). The measurement of satisfaction in terms of justice and uncertainty may be confounding appraisal elements with satisfaction itself, if it is considered that cognitive appraisals and emotions are separate elements of the emotional experience (Barrett et al., 2007).

Interestingly while the discussions of how satisfaction and dissatisfaction are determined in terms of their emotional and cognitive antecedents are wide ranging, when looked at in terms of the emotions literature and theory discussed previously, it becomes fairly difficult to find out what exactly satisfaction is.

For this purpose it is of use to look closely at the measurements used. When this is done, it can be seen that satisfaction is often measured as a) an emotion, and/or b) an assessment of the expectations- performance gap and/or c) an overall measure of satisfaction which simply asks respondents to indicate their degree of satisfaction or 4) a combination of the preceding elements. In many cases the measurement of the independent variables (IV) and satisfaction itself (the dependent variable –DV) overlap to some degree.

For example Homburg et al. (2006, p.24) measure the performance/expectations gap (IV) as '*The performance of the (product) meets my expectations*' and the satisfaction measure (DV) includes the item '*The ... (product) compares to an ideal ... (product)*'. In both cases a comparison of performance and expectations is measured, but the two constructs of cognitive assessment and satisfaction are supposed to be distinct.

Westbrook (1980, p.69) in his early satisfaction scale measures all three dimensions with three items: one a seven point scale on emotions with the question '*How do you feel about (product/service)*' ranging from 'terrible' to 'delighted' with satisfied and dissatisfied as points 3 and 5 on the scale. The other two items measure overall satisfaction and extent to which needs are met. In this case the satisfaction measure in fact assesses the cognitive and emotional antecedents of satisfaction as outlined in the discussion above.

Oliver (1980) and Westbrook and Oliver (1991) measure emotions such as joy, delight, disgust as independent variables, then satisfaction (DV) is measured with items such as: '*I am satisfied with my decision ----; —If I had it to do all over again, I would feel differently about \_\_\_\_\_—My choice to ... or not to ... was a wise one. —I feel bad about my decision concerning ---- —I think that I did the right thing when I decided to--- or not to --- —I am not happy that I did what I did about the -----*' (Oliver, 1981, p.463). It can be noted that 'I feel bad' and 'I am not happy' both have emotional connotations and thus could overlap with the independent variable. A similar phenomenon can be seen in the measurement of satisfaction by Voss et al. (1998) '*1. I was satisfied with the service provided. 2. I was delighted with the service quality provided. 3. I was unhappy with the level of service provided.*'

In these two cases the emotional antecedent and satisfaction measures overlap.

These are all measurements that have been used in many marketing studies since. More recently, there has been a move towards simply using one item in the measurement of

satisfaction. Montoya-Weiss et al. (2003) have used single items such as ‘*Considering all of your experiences as a customer of X, how satisfied are you with the level of service that X provides?*’. Rust and Chung (2006) have made the point that satisfaction measures are usually highly intercorrelated and therefore the use of one overall measurement item is sufficient.

In summary, the conceptualization and measurement of satisfaction remains challenging when taken in the context of emotions, and it may be that simple ‘overall satisfaction’ is sufficient for its measurement, and allows the respondent to determine their own definition of satisfaction (Szymanski and Henard, 2001). This thesis suggests that this simple approach also bypasses the problem of conceptualizing satisfaction itself as cognitive or affective, meaning that the concepts associated with cognitive determinants (such as the performance-expectations gap or other appraisal elements such as fairness, uncertainty or agency) or emotional determinants (such as joy, delight, disgust) can be treated separately from the dependent variable of overall satisfaction.

### **2.3.2. Relationship between emotions and satisfaction**

#### ***Hedonic and Utilitarian Issues in Consumer Services***

Since this thesis concerns the study of emotions in a call center encounter, it is worth considering what kind of consumer experience it is before proceeding to a hypothesis about the relationship between emotions and satisfaction. It is useful in the context of emotions to consider whether the experience is undergone for utilitarian or hedonic purposes (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Richins, 2013; Spangenberg et al., 1997).

In a highly cited study, Arnould and Price (1993) discussed the idea that ‘extraordinary’ experiences, an extreme form of hedonic experience should consider the emotional aspect of satisfaction. They noted that the traditional concept of satisfaction based on the performance-expectations gap concerned mainly expectations and performance assessments of the technical and utilitarian features of the experience. In a hedonic or

extraordinary experience they argued that technical and utilitarian assessments were irrelevant for two reasons. Firstly, an extraordinary experience by definition meant that the consumer had little previous experience on which to base his or her expectations, and secondly the highly hedonic nature of the experience meant that both expectations and performance were actually expressed in emotional terms. The authors do not distinguish between satisfaction and emotion in this type of experience, and the results of a two-year qualitative and quantitative study provided a measurement scale in terms of how the consumer *felt* about three aspects of the experience. Many other consumer studies in the area of hedonic experiences advance similar ideas in that emotions lead to satisfaction (e.g. Bonnefoy-Claudet and Ghantous, 2013; Hosany and Prayag, 2013; Koenig-Lewis and Palmer, 2008; Miniero et al., 2014), that in the context of emotions it is worth exploring customer experience than customer satisfaction (e.g. Klaus and Maklan, 2011) or that satisfaction can be equated directly with the positive emotions felt during or after the experience (Pullman and Gross, 2004). In this stream of literature, the emotions investigated are mostly positive, although some studies look at negative or neutral emotions as well, either as an indicator of a negative hedonic experience (e.g. Hosany and Prayag, 2013) or included as reverse indicators of positive emotions (Koenig-Lewis and Palmer, 2008).

If a service is used by a consumer for utilitarian purposes however, it has been suggested that while both emotions and cognition are important, the cognitive element is more important: *'hedonic value is experienced on both affective and cognitive levels while the utilitarian component, which also may include both affective and cognitive dimensions, is dominated by the cognitive element'*. (Spangenberg et al., 1997, p.235).

This approach is clearly demonstrated in the few studies that exist which investigate customer satisfaction in call centers (e.g. Bennington and Cummane, 1998; Bennington et al., 2000; Feinberg et al., 2000; 2002; Jaiswal, 2008) which all cite operational

determinants as antecedents of caller satisfaction such as waiting time, average speed of answer, average abandonment by the caller.

The result of these approaches has been a) that emotions, particularly positive emotions have been considered more fully in the literature on hedonic experiences than in customer experiences with more utilitarian objectives, and that b) cognitive determinants and measures of satisfaction rather than emotions have been more widely studied in the latter type of experience.

One of the contributions of this work therefore is to increase knowledge about the role of both positive and negative emotions in a service (call center) which is used for almost entirely utilitarian purposes.

Studies investigating cognitive antecedents to satisfaction (particularly quality and value constructs) in consumer service encounters are extremely numerous, and will not be reviewed here (see Choi and Kim, 2013; Cronin Jr. et al, 2000; Jamel and Naser, 2011; Lemke et al., 2011; Rust and Oliver, 1994, for an overview) since the focus is on the role of emotions in satisfaction.

### ***Emotions and Satisfaction***

Other studies have shown that emotions and satisfaction with product purchase and use are linked (see Dubé and Schmitt, 1991; Homburg et al., 2006; Phillips and Baumgartner, 2002). The literature on the relationship between emotions and satisfaction in utilitarian services such as call centers can be differentiated from these in that they are oriented towards tasks and goals, customers require these services for a specific purpose, and are often socially interactive (between the service provider and the customer) (Smith, 2006).

Liljander and Strandvik (1997) measured both negative and positive emotions in the context of a labor bureau service in Finland and found that negative emotions were correlated with satisfaction and that there was a positive relationship between positive



emotions and satisfaction. Del Rio et al. (2009) looked at service recovery emotions and satisfaction, and found a negative relationship between negative emotions and satisfaction, and some evidence that procedural justice was also an antecedent of negative emotions. The work of most interest here was a study by Dubé and Morgan (1998) who showed through a study of hospital patients (staying for a median time of 5 days) that satisfaction and emotions are linked in a utilitarian service context. Their conclusions indicate that positive and negative emotions do not necessarily change in tandem, i.e. a decrease in negative emotions does not mean an increase in positive emotions and vice-versa. This finding is in accordance with the view that emotions can be seen as two-dimensional (positive vs. negative). The results displayed in their paper also showed that positive emotions during the stay significantly predicted retrospective satisfaction whereas negative emotions did not.

An alternative view on the relative effect of positive emotions and negative emotions on satisfaction is that negative emotions have a greater effect on satisfaction than positive emotions do. Mano and Oliver (1993) found that negative affect has a stronger effect on satisfaction than positive affect does. This might be explained by the loss aversion element of prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979), which recommends that negative things have stronger effect on responses than positive things. Losses overweight gains (Einhorn and Hogarth, 1981). Baumeister et al. (2001) suggested that bad (negative) things have a stronger lasting effect than good (positive) things based on the idea that negative information are more processed and have a stronger influence on the final impression than positive ones. More particularly, Clore et al. (1994) and Schwartz (1990) found that bad moods generate more information processing than good moods.

However and despite these results, the hypotheses are:

**H1:** Positive emotions have a positive effect on satisfaction

**H2:** Negative emotions have a negative effect on satisfaction

**H3:** Positive emotions have a greater effect on satisfaction than negative emotions

The number of articles explicitly studying the link between emotions and satisfaction in the service industries other than for hedonic experiences is surprisingly small considering the widespread anecdotal evidence indicating that this is an area in which emotions, in particular negative emotions are felt as illustrated in table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Previous Studies on the Emotions-Satisfaction Link

Authors	Description	Measures	Methodology	Results
Liljander and Strandvik (1997)	Relationship between customers' perceived emotions and perceived overall satisfaction	Frequency of occurrence of positive (3) and negative (4) emotions measured on a 7-point scale  Overall satisfaction: 1 item of a 7-point graphic scale	Utilitarian experience  Public service  Labour force bureau  Finland  Correlation	Emotions are correlated with satisfaction  Depression and hopefulness have the smallest correlations with satisfaction, while feelings of anger and positive surprise have the largest correlations with satisfaction
Dubé and Morgan (1998)	To study the change in consumption emotions and satisfaction over time in an extended service transaction	Emotions: PANAS for positive emotions (10 items) and negative emotions (10)  In-process satisfaction: 6-item scale on a 7-point Likert scale	Utilitarian service  Health care service  93 consumers reported in-process positive and negative emotions and satisfaction every day of their hospital stay (median length of stay of 5 days) and global retrospective judgments of the same variables upon departure	Emotions and satisfaction are linked  Positive and negative emotions do not necessarily change in tandem

Table 2.2. Previous Studies on the Emotions-Satisfaction Link

Authors	Description	Measures	Methodology	Results
Phillips and Baumgartner (2002)	To study the role of consumption emotions in the satisfaction response	Emotions: 2 dimensions, 15 positive items and 8 negative items, 7-point Likert scale	Utilitarian experience	Positive emotions have a positive effect on satisfaction
			Product	Negative emotions have a negative effect on satisfaction
		Satisfaction: 3 items with a 7-point Likert scale	1st study: 53 students had to analyse the description of an orange juice and then taste it  2nd study: 51 students were asked to imagine consuming the new orange juice and experiencing its sensory features	
Homburg et al. (2006)	To examine the joint effects of cognitive and affective factors on satisfaction judgments in a dynamic setting	Affect: the intensity of elation, delight, and joy - 7-point Likert scale  Satisfaction measured with 3 items on a 11-point Likert scale	Path analysis	Emotions have an impact on satisfaction but their effect decreases as the number of experiences increases over time
			Utilitarian experience	
			Product  157 students had to test an academic CD-ROM tutorial  Regression analysis	

Table 2.2. Previous Studies on the Emotions-Satisfaction Link

Authors	Description	Measures	Methodology	Results
del Rio et al. (2009)	To investigate the relationship between perceived justice, negative emotions, and satisfaction during service recovery	Negative emotions (3): angry, offended and disappointed using a 7-point Likert scale  Satisfaction: 6 items using a 7-point Likert scale	Utilitarian experience  Service  554 cell-phone users  Structural Equation Modeling	Negative emotions have a negative effect on satisfaction
Bonnefoy-Claudet and Ghantous (2013)	To study the emotions used in the evaluation of customers' experience and how these emotions influence customers' satisfaction	Emotions: 11 items on 3 dimensions  Satisfaction: 2 items	Hedonic experience  Service  540 respondents of a French ski resort  Structural Equation Modeling	Joy, peacefulness and excitement have a strong effect on satisfaction  Surprise has no effect on satisfaction

Table 2.2. Previous Studies on the Emotions-Satisfaction Link

Authors	Description	Measures	Methodology	Results
Hosany and Prayag (2013)	To investigate relationships between tourists' emotional profiles and their post-consumption evaluations of satisfaction	Emotional experience measured by a 3-dimensional (joy, love and positive surprise) 15-item measure on a 7-point scale	Hedonic experience  Service  520 respondents had to recall their overall experiences of the most recent tourist destination they visited for pleasure purposes  Cluster analysis	5 types of clusters: unemotional, delighted, negatives, mixed and passionate  The 'delighted' cluster reports the highest satisfaction for instance and the 'negatives' have the lowest satisfaction level  Tourist's emotional profiles have an impact on satisfaction
Miniero et al. (2014)	The study of the interaction between arousal and dominance and their impact on pleasure. The effect of pleasure on customer satisfaction is also investigated	Emotions measured with the PAD model. 2 items for each of the 3 dimensions with a semantic differential scale  Satisfaction was measured with three 7-point Likert-type items	One-way ANOVA  Hedonic experience  Service  533 visitors of a popular historical villa in Europe  Structural Equation Modeling	Pleasure positively, strongly, and significantly affects satisfaction



Table 2.2 introduces the relevant studies investigating the link between emotions and satisfaction in different industries. It becomes clear that the number of articles focusing on this link in a utilitarian service context is small. Studies focused either on hedonic experience or product in a utilitarian context.

The next section involves the review of the literature on loyalty and more particularly on the relationships between emotions and loyalty and then between satisfaction and loyalty.

### **2.3.3. Understanding the concept of loyalty**

Loyalty is very important for strategic marketing planning of companies in order to generate profit and sales from customers (Rust and Chung, 2006). However, the definition of loyalty in the marketing literature can vary depending on the approach taken (Evanschitzky and Wunderlich, 2006; Oliver, 1999; Uncles et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2006).

The first stream of research on loyalty mainly focuses on brand loyalty towards tangible goods (Cunningham, 1956; Day, 1969; Dick and Basu, 1994). Research has then evolved and the scope widened to store loyalty and vendor loyalty (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998; Cunningham, 1961). The concept of loyalty towards intangible goods (e.g. service loyalty) has been developed by Gremler and Brown (1996). Service loyalty is the construct taken in this research since this thesis investigates an experience in a service context (call center). Service loyalty is defined as ‘the degree to which a customer exhibits repeat purchasing behavior from a service provider, possesses a positive attitudinal disposition toward the provider, and considers using only this provider when a need for this service exists’ (Gremler and Brown, 1996; in Caruana, 2002, p. 813). Loyalty is therefore considered as a commitment to repeat purchase (Bei and Chiao, 2001; Oliver, 1997), as an expression of preference for a company as compared to others (Zeithaml et al., 1996) and includes word-of-mouth communication (Zeithaml et al., 1996). This definition is deemed appropriate for this thesis as it encompasses both the behavioral and attitudinal aspects of loyalty.

As suggested by Oliver (1997), loyalty is formed across four sequential stages and goes from cognitive to affect, then affect to intention (conative aspects) and finally intention to behavior (action). First, the consumer becomes loyal from a cognitive aspect (e.g. this company is better over others). Second, the affective aspect of loyalty (e.g. the consumer likes the company over others) appears. These two forms indicate that the customer wants to be loyal but not necessarily on a long-term perspective. Both cognitive and affective aspects can be captured by repeat behaviors. The conative and action aspects deal more with long-term commitment. From this stage, customers demonstrate a high motivation to continue doing business with the company (conative loyalty) and finally act accordingly (behavioral loyalty). In addition, based on Zeithaml et al. (1996) word-of-mouth is included in the loyalty constructs.

There are two competing approaches of loyalty. The first one, the behavioral (stochastic) approach consists in exclusive purchase, market share, brand loyalty, switching behavior and repeat purchase (Rundle-Thiele and Mackay, 2001). Based on this view, Reichheld (2003) suggested the use of word-of-mouth behaviors to measure loyalty. The second is an attitude-based approach which focuses more on attitudes towards brand preferences, commitment and probability of purchase (Taylor et al., 2006). Given the difficulties in getting behavioral data in the service context, an attitudinal approach has been considered to be suitable for this thesis. Moreover, an attitudinal approach fits better with the survey methodology used in this thesis (Rundle-Thiele and Mackay, 2001).

Following these different approaches, Dick and Basu (1994, p.100) conceptualized loyalty as 'the relationship between the relative attitude toward an entity (brand / service / store / vendor) and patronage behavior'. This relationship generates four types of loyalty as illustrated in figure 2.3.



**Figure 2.3. Relative Attitude – Behavior Relationship**

		Repeat Patronage	
		High	Low
Relative Attitude	High	Loyalty	Latent Loyalty
	Low	Spurious Loyalty	No Loyalty

*From Dick and Basu (1994, p.101)*

When customer shows a low relative attitude accompanied by low repeat patronage, there is no loyalty. In the second case, spurious loyalty, a low relative attitude is combined with high repeat patronage. Latent loyalty occurs when there is a combination of high relative attitude with low repeat patronage. Finally, loyalty appears when there is a match between relative attitude and repeat patronage.

The next section involves an overview of the marketing literature on the relationships between emotions and loyalty.

**2.3.4. Emotions and loyalty**

The number of articles which consider the effect of both negative and positive emotions as independent, separate predictors of loyalty is quite small. Most research so has focused on a) emotions of the same valence (i.e. only positive or only negative emotions), b) emotions conceptualized as a one-dimensional ‘emotions’ construct or c) emotions as a mediating variable.

Previous research showed that positive emotions play a significant positive role in the behavioral outcomes such as loyalty. Bloemer and de Ruyter (1999) investigated the effect of satisfaction on loyalty with positive emotions as a moderating variable (e.g. interested, excited, strong, enthusiastic, proud, alert, inspired, and active), in diverse service settings that differ in their level of involvement (e.g. restaurant, holiday camp, travel agency). They

found a significant positive relationship between positive emotions and loyalty. Gracia et al. (2011) investigated the link between service quality and loyalty with positive emotions (e.g. happiness, pleasure and excitement) as a moderating variable. Their findings indicate that positive emotions have a significant positive impact on loyalty. Results from Loureiro and Roschk's study (2014) are similar - customer loyalty is driven by positive emotions - even though their measurement of positive emotions was based on a bipolar scale (pleasure and arousal). Finally, positive emotions such as joy and pleasure are strong predictors of commitment to a service provider (Ranganathan et al., 2013).

Research on the link between negative emotions and loyalty mostly concerns discrete emotions. Anger, irritation and frustration are the most common negative emotions studied in relationship with loyalty.

Bougie et al. (2003) investigated the relationships between customer satisfaction and behavioral responses to service failures (e.g. negative word of mouth (NWOM), complaint behavior, third-party complaining and switching) through the moderating effect of anger. They found that anger is a significant antecedent to customers' behavioral responses to service failure. This is in line with other studies indicating that angry customers are likely to complain, show negative repurchase intentions (Folkes et al., 1987; Harrison-Walker, 2012; Jorgensen, 1996; Kalamas et al., 2008; Wetzer et al., 2007) and spread NWOM (Gelbrich, 2010; Maute and Dubé, 1999). Wetzer et al. (2007) also reported that when customers experienced irritation or frustration, they are more likely to engage in NWOM (Wetzer et al., 2007). Gelbrich (2010) in a study of the moderating effect of frustration and anger between informational support and WOM suggests that frustration can lead to confrontative coping or support-seeking WOM, whereas anger leads to vindictive WOM.

However, the relationships between negative emotions and loyalty can vary according to the type of negative emotions. Drawing on Appraisal Theory and based on the 'attribution of responsibility' (the attribution to self vs. others), negative emotions can be either inward

or outward (Lazarus, 1991; Smith and Lazarus, 1993). Inward negative emotions (e.g. sadness, guilt or embarrassment) occur when the individual holds himself responsible for the situation. In contrast, outward negative emotions (e.g. anger and frustration) are felt when individuals blame the other party for the current situation.

Haj-Salem and Chebat (2014) studied the links between switching costs and behavioral responses (e.g. loyalty and revenge) with negative emotions (inward and outward) as mediating variables. Findings indicate that negative switching costs (such as monetary loss) trigger outward negative emotions (anger, frustration), which motivate customers to quit their service provider. In contrast positive switching costs (such as social switching costs) lead to inward negative emotions (sadness, guilt) which in fact have a positive effect on loyalty intentions. These findings indicate that even though customers felt negative emotions during a service experience, they might stay and remain loyal to the company (depending on the type of negative emotions).

In this thesis in line with Izard (1977) and Babin et al. (1998), the author considers negative emotions as a single dimension on a general emotion construct and does not differentiate inward and outward negative emotions.

To our knowledge, there are few studies investigating the role of positive and negative emotions as a two-dimensional construct on loyalty. Westbrook (1987) examined the impact of positive (e.g. joy, interest, surprise) and negative emotions (e.g. anger, disgust and contempt) on complaint behavior and word-of-mouth in a product consumption context. Results from this study (Westbrook, 1987) indicate that negative and positive emotions have a significant (negative and positive respectively) impact on word-of-mouth while complaint behavior is influenced by negative emotions only. Since this thesis measures loyalty in terms of word-of-mouth and recommendation the following hypotheses are made.

**H4:** Positive emotions have a positive effect on loyalty

**H5:** Negative emotions have a negative effect on loyalty

None of the articles cited above explicitly study the relative effect of positive and negative emotions on loyalty, and so the next hypothesis is based on the observation of empirical results in two studies. In the first, DeWitt et al. (2008) in a scenario-based study concerning the hotel and restaurant industry found slightly higher positive effects of positive emotions on loyalty than negative effects of negative emotions on loyalty. In the second, a study of bank customers, Chebat and Slusarczyk (2005) focused on the links between justice and loyalty with emotions as mediating variable. In contrast to DeWitt et al. (2008), Chebat and Slusarczyk's (2005) results indicate that negative emotions have a slightly stronger impact on loyalty ( $\beta = -0.39$ ) than positive emotions ( $\beta = 0.31$ ).

This research carried out for this thesis differs from DeWitt et al's (2008) in the fact that it concerns a utilitarian service, and as such positive emotions may play a lesser role in loyalty. When customers go to a restaurant or a hotel, experiencing positive emotions is one of the aims of the consumption of the service, which is not so when they contact a call center. This being the case, the sixth hypothesis predicts results more similar to the utilitarian banking experience investigated by Chebat and Slusarczyk (2005):

**H6:** Negative emotions have a greater effect on loyalty than positive emotions

One of the contributions of this work therefore is to increase knowledge about the role of positive and negative emotions as independent variables measured with a two-dimensional construct on loyalty and more particularly the respective contribution of positive emotions and negative emotions on loyalty.

The following section introduces the relationships between satisfaction and loyalty. Subsequently, a review of the linkages between emotions, satisfaction and loyalty is provided.

### **2.3.5. Satisfaction and loyalty**

The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty has been extensively studied in the marketing literature.

Service scholars report that satisfaction with the service is the key determinant of customer loyalty (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Mittal and Kamakura 2001; Oliver, 1997; Picon et al., 2014; Zeithaml et al., 1996). This means that a satisfied customer is more likely to repurchase, spread positive word-of-mouth (PWOM) recommendations and engage in a long-term relationship with the company.

However, another stream of research argues that despite the existing positive relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, satisfaction does not fully explain loyalty. For instance Szymanski and Henard (2001) found that satisfaction explain 25% of the variance in repeat purchase. Rust et al. (1999) suggested that customers' certainty about quality has an impact on the satisfaction-behavior link. They showed that the level of expectations related to quality as compared to the performance has an effect on customers' behavior since customers are more sensitive to negative disconfirmation in quality than to positive disconfirmation. The relationship may be affected by elements such as the level of satisfaction, the strength of customers' judgments, the type of customers or the prior relational experience (Chandrashekar et al., 2007; Rust et al., 2004). Indeed, previous research found that though satisfied, customers can defect or conversely, dissatisfied customers can remain loyal to a company (Reichheld, 1996). Despite these arguments, this thesis follows the more dominant view that:

**H7: Satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty**

2.3.6. Summary of model and hypotheses

Figure 2.4 provides the conceptual model and table 2.3 presents the hypotheses that stemmed from the literature review.

Figure 2.4. The Conceptual Model

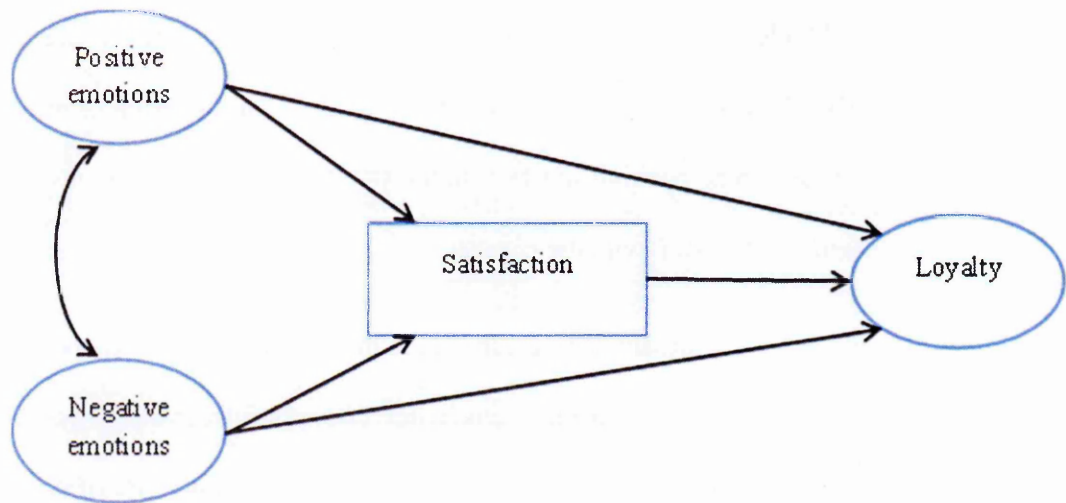


Table 2.3. Research Hypotheses

H1	Positive emotions have a positive effect on satisfaction
H2	Negative emotions have a negative effect on satisfaction
H3	Positive emotions have a greater effect on satisfaction than negative emotions
H4	Positive emotions have a positive effect on loyalty
H5	Negative emotions have a negative effect on loyalty
H6	Negative emotions have a greater effect on loyalty than positive emotions
H7	Satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty

In this section, the hypotheses to be tested in the quantitative study (described in the next chapter) were developed based on a consideration of emotions conceptualized along the dimensions of positive and negative emotions (Izard, 1977).

### **2.3.7. Potential moderators of these relationships**

Even though the main aim of the thesis is to focus on the direct link between emotions, satisfaction and loyalty, it is worth exploring potential moderators of these relationships.

To our knowledge there are few studies investigating potential moderators of the emotions-satisfaction link and of the emotions-loyalty link. Research has investigated the direct link between emotions and these outcomes or emotions as moderators between two variables (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1999; Chitturi et al., 2008).

However, two recent studies investigated the role of moderators in the emotions-satisfaction link and in the emotions-loyalty link. Bonnefoy-Claudet and Ghantous (2013) studied the moderating effect of perceived value on the link between positive emotions and satisfaction in a hedonic context (e.g. ski resort). Their findings showed that perceived value strongly moderate the impact of excitement and joy on satisfaction. However, it does not moderate the impact of peacefulness on satisfaction. One recent study (Loureiro and Roschk, 2014) investigated the moderating effect of age on the relationship between positive emotions and loyalty in both utilitarian and hedonic store brands with offline and online existence. The authors found that age moderates the relationship between positive emotions and loyalty in the offline context only. Positive emotions are strong predictors of loyalty for younger participants (less than 30 years old) but not for older participants (more than 30 years old).

Studies investigating satisfaction as a key antecedent to loyalty are extremely numerous (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Mittal and Kamakura 2001; Oliver, 1997; Picon et al., 2014; Zeithaml et al., 1996). However previous research showed that satisfaction is not enough to explain loyalty. The variance explained by satisfaction is relatively small and despite a certain level of satisfaction customers still defect (Rust et al., 1999; Szymanski and Henard, 2001). In this context previous studies focused on variables that may moderate the satisfaction-loyalty link. Moderators might modify either the form and/or the strength of

the relationship between a predictor (e.g. satisfaction) and a criterion variable (e.g. loyalty) (Sharma et al., 1981).

The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is strongly influenced by the existence of moderators (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Kumar et al., 2013). A summary of studies on moderators between satisfaction and loyalty is provided in table 2.4.

Seiders et al. (2005) identified three types of moderators: customer, relational and marketplace characteristics. Customer characteristics include moderators such as gender, age, income, area of residence, level of education, marital status, number of children, variety-seeking, and involvement (Homburg and Giering, 2001; Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Seiders et al., 2005; Sharma et al., 2012; Walsh et al., 2008). Past research presents opposite results since Mittal and Kamakura (2001) and Sharma et al. (2012) found a moderating effect of age and gender whereas Cooil et al. (2007) and Walsh et al. (2008) found no effect. Relational characteristics are moderators such as elaboration (e.g. motivation and ability of a consumer to elaborate on the store choice) (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998), customer expertise (Cooil et al., 2007; Walsh et al., 2008), length of the relationship (Chandrashekar et al., 2007; Gonçalves and Sampaio, 2012; Seiders et al., 2005), and value (Agustin and Singh, 2005). Length of the relationship for instance leads to contradictory results depending either on the context of the study or the measurement used for the constructs (Chandrashekar et al., 2007; Cooil et al., 2007; Gonçalves and Sampaio, 2012). Finally, marketplace moderators are switching costs (de Matos et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2001; Oliva et al., 1992), type of product (Olsen, 2002; Szymanski and Henard, 2001), the level of competition (Seiders et al., 2005), and the kind of medium (offline vs. online) (Shankar et al., 2003). Olsen (2002) found that the relationship differs across products while Szymanski and Henard (2001) showed that the correlation between satisfaction and repeat purchasing is lower on average for products rather than for services.



Table 2.4. Potential Moderators of the Satisfaction-Loyalty Relationship

Authors	Description	Moderators	Methodology	Results
Oliva et al. (1992)	Link between customer satisfaction (5 items) and brand loyalty (1 item)	<i>Relational characteristic:</i> Customer transaction costs	89 customers of General Electric Supply  Regression analysis	When transaction costs are sufficiently high, a consumer may remain loyal even under moderate dissatisfaction
Bloemer and de Ruyter (1998)	Link between store satisfaction (2 items) and loyalty (Repeat Visiting Behavior, 1 item)	<i>Relational characteristic:</i> Elaboration: the motivation (store choice involvement) and the ability (store choice deliberation) of a consumer to elaborate on the store choice	124 Swiss customers of a department store  Hierarchical regression analysis	Elaboration strengthens the positive effect of a store satisfaction on store loyalty
Homburg and Giering (2001)	Link between customer satisfaction (three-dimensions) and customer loyalty (3 dimensions)	<i>Customer characteristics:</i> Gender, age, income, involvement and variety-seeking	943 customers of a German car manufacturer  Multi-group LISREL	Variety-seeking, age and income are important moderators
Lee et al. (2001)	Link between customer satisfaction (4 dimensions) and attitudinal loyalty (3 items)	<i>Marketplace characteristic:</i> Switching costs	256 customers of a French mobile phone service  Regression analysis	Switching costs play a role depending on the type of amount of calling time of the contract. A significant role for the 'economy' (less than 2hrs) and for the 'standard groups' (from 2 to 4 hrs). No effect for mobile lovers (more than 4hrs)

Table 2.4. Potential Moderators of the Satisfaction-Loyalty Relationship

Authors	Description	Moderators	Methodology	Results
Mittal and Kamakura (2001)	Link between customer satisfaction (1 item) and repurchase intent and repurchase behaviour (1 item) and repurchase intent (1 item)	<i>Customer characteristics:</i> Gender, age, level of education, marital status, number of children, area of residence	100 040 automotive customers  Consistent Akaike Information Criterion (CAIC)	Positive effect for age and gender  Negative effect for level of education and number of children  No difference based on areas of residence
Szymanski and Henard (2001)	Link between satisfaction and repeat purchasing	<i>Marketplace characteristic:</i> Type of product	Data from 50 of 85 empirical studies on customer satisfaction  A meta-analysis	Correlation between satisfaction and repeat purchasing is lower on average when products rather than services are the focus of the study
Olsen (2002)	Link between customer satisfaction (2 items, bipolar scale) and repurchase loyalty (1 item)	<i>Marketplace characteristic:</i> Type of product	991 Norwegian persons responsible for preparing the family dinner in household  Structural Equation Modeling	The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty varies across products
Capraro et al. (2003)	Link between customer satisfaction (4 items) and likelihood of defection measured by switching risk (1 item)	<i>Customer characteristic:</i> Consumer objective knowledge and consumer subjective knowledge	385 consumers of actual health insurance choices  Regression analysis	No effect of both types of consumer knowledge

Table 2.4. Potential Moderators of the Satisfaction-Loyalty Relationship

Authors	Description	Moderators	Methodology	Results
Shankar et al. (2003)	Link between overall customer satisfaction (1 item) and loyalty (1 item)	<i>Marketplace characteristic:</i> Type of medium (online vs. offline)	2 sets of data in the lodging sector of the travel services industry	Overall satisfaction has a stronger positive effect on loyalty online than offline
Agustin and Singh (2005)	Link between transaction-specific customer satisfaction with the last experience (3 items, bipolar scale) and loyalty intentions (3 items)	<i>Marketplace characteristic:</i> Relational value	Correlation  2 services industries: 246 customers of retail stores and 113 customers of nonbusiness airline travel companies	Relational value strengthens the satisfaction-loyalty relationship
Olsen et al. (2005)	Link between customer satisfaction (2 items) and repurchase loyalty as two-dimensional (repurchase behaviour and intention to purchase)	<i>Customer characteristic:</i> Subjective ambivalence	Structural Equation Modeling  1 194 Norwegian consumers of seafood	Subjective ambivalence is not a moderator variable
			Structural Equation Modeling	



Table 2.4. Potential Moderators of the Satisfaction-Loyalty Relationship

Authors	Description	Moderators	Methodology	Results
Seiders et al. (2005)	Link between customer satisfaction (3 items) and repurchase behaviour (2 items) and repurchase intentions (2 items)	<p><i>Customer characteristics:</i> Involvement and household income</p> <p><i>Relational characteristics:</i> Relationship age, relationship program participation</p> <p><i>Marketplace characteristics:</i> Convenience, competitive intensity</p>	<p>945 North-American customers of a retail chain in women's apparel and home furnishings</p> <p>Regression analysis</p>	<p>Customer and marketplace characteristics have a significant moderating role</p> <p>Relational characteristics have a moderating effect on repurchase behaviour but not on repurchase intentions</p>
Bielen and Demoulin (2007)	Link between satisfaction with the service (1 item) and the behavioral-intention dimension of loyalty (2 items)	<p><i>Customer characteristic:</i> Waiting time satisfaction</p>	<p>946 customers of a Belgian healthcare industry</p> <p>Regression analysis</p>	<p>Waiting time satisfaction has a moderating negative effect on the satisfaction-loyalty link</p>
Chandrashekar et al. (2007)	Link between overall customer satisfaction (1 item) and loyalty based on recommendation (1 item)	<p><i>Customer characteristic:</i> Satisfaction strength</p> <p><i>Relational characteristic:</i> Length of the relationship</p>	<p>2 studies: A business-to-business service provider and an individual customer experiences with service providers from various industries</p>	<p>Satisfaction strength has a central role in the satisfaction-loyalty link</p> <p>Length of the relationship does not moderate the satisfaction-loyalty link</p>

Table 2.4. Potential Moderators of the Satisfaction-Loyalty Relationship

Authors	Description	Moderators	Methodology	Results
Cool et al. (2007)	Link between overall satisfaction (1 item) and share of wallet (the percentage of total business, in dollars, with the financial institution)	<i>Customer characteristics:</i> Gender, income, and level of education  <i>Relational characteristics:</i> Expertise and length of relationship	4 319 Canadian households on financial products (deposit, loan, and investment)  A two-latent regression model	Age and education do not moderate the satisfaction-loyalty link  Income and length of relationship are important moderators in the satisfaction-loyalty link  No support regarding the moderating effect of expertise
Walsh et al. (2008)	Link between satisfaction (satisfaction with employees and satisfaction with assortment/services) and customer loyalty as two-dimensional construct (attitudinal and behavioral loyalty)	<i>Customer characteristics:</i> Age and gender  <i>Relational characteristic:</i> Expertise and loyalty cards  <i>Relational / customer characteristics:</i> Critical incidents recovery	776 German customers of a DYI retailing chain  Structural Equation Modeling	Gender and age do not moderate the satisfaction-loyalty link  Income, expertise, loyalty cards and critical incidents recovery are relevant general moderators of the link between satisfaction and loyalty
de Matos et al. (2009)	Link between satisfaction (29 attributes) and loyalty as two-dimensional construct (attitudinal loyalty - 4 items - and behavioral loyalty - 5 items)	<i>Marketplace characteristic:</i> Switching costs	7 461 Brazilian customers of a retail bank  Structural Equation Modeling	Significant role of switching costs with greater emphasis to the influence of satisfaction on behavioral loyalty

Table 2.4. Potential Moderators of the Satisfaction-Loyalty Relationship

Authors	Description	Moderators	Methodology	Results
Tuu et al. (2011)	Link between satisfaction (1 item, a bipolar scale) and loyalty (behavioral and attitudinal loyalty)	<i>Customer characteristics:</i> Perceived risk, consumer knowledge and certainty	387 Vietnamese consumer in a food context  Structural Equation Modeling	Negative effect of perceived risk on the satisfaction-loyalty link  Positive effect of consumer knowledge and certainty on the satisfaction-loyalty link
Gonçalves and Sampaio (2012)	Link between customer satisfaction (1 item) and loyalty measured by repurchase intentions (3 items), by repurchase behavior (number of transactions and amount spent)	<i>Customer characteristics:</i> Gender, income, age and involvement  <i>Relational characteristics:</i> The length of the relationship	1 210 customers of a Portuguese credit card company  Hierarchical regression	Demographic and relational characteristics are important moderators. Gender and age have a significant impact only when loyalty is measured by behavioral intentions.  The length of the relationship moderates the satisfaction-loyalty link when loyalty is assessed by repurchase behavior  No moderating effect of income and involvement
Sharma et al. (2012)	Link between satisfaction (2 items) and behavioral intentions (4 items)	<i>Customer characteristics:</i> Gender and age	2 727 Japanese customers of 250 retail outlets (cosmetics, electronics, fashion, jewelry, telecom service, and department stores)  Structural Equation Modeling	Age and gender moderate the satisfaction-loyalty link

In the coming section, the theoretical characterization of frustration is presented. As mentioned in the introduction, customer frustration has been observed in previous research in utilitarian service settings (Bennington, 2000; Gelbrich, 2010; Guchait and Namasivayam, 2012; Peevers et al., 2009; Tronvoll, 2011), but not much looked into, and frustration also emerged as a dominant emotion felt by call center customers in this thesis in studies 1, 2 and 3.

A search of the literature did not provide a satisfactory overview of what exactly this discrete emotion was from a conceptual point of view, unlike other emotions that have been the subject of a large body of theoretical study (e.g. anger, Gibson and Callister, 2010). The following section therefore attempts to fill this theoretical gap by characterizing frustration through a critical review of the literature.

## **2.4. The Frustration Experience**

### **2.4.1. Definition of Frustration**

Frustration is a commonly experienced but under-researched emotion (Van Steenburg et al., 2013) although it is a relevant motivator of consumer behavior (Wetzer et al., 2007). An environment which is particularly fertile for customer frustration to grow is that of the call center (Grandey et al., 2004) because employees work under heavily monitored, tightly timed conditions, with low customer orientation cultures (Dean, 2002).

There are various definitions of frustration in the literature. These definitions share the idea that frustration arises when a goal is blocked for which success was expected. According to Dollard et al.'s frustration-aggression model (1939), frustration happens when an initiated goal-response is interrupted. Similarly, Spector (1978) defined frustration as "both the interference with goal attainment or goal oriented activity and the interference with goal maintenance." (p. 816). Some years after Spector's (1978) work, Smith and Ellsworth (1985) presented a study where they described several emotional experiences based on their cognitive appraisals. According to their findings, frustration is similar to anger in that

it is a very unpleasant emotion in which individuals anticipate expending extreme effort. What makes it unique and independent from anger experiences according to Smith and Ellsworth (1985), is that frustration arises when individuals fail at something for which success is expected. Following this line of argumentation, it can be suggested that appraisals of goal blocking are a pre-condition for frustration to occur, rather than part of the emotion *per se*.

#### **2.4.1.1. Frustration and valence**

As mentioned in the previous sections on emotions, valence is one of the dimensions along which emotions can be appraised (e.g. Cacioppo and Berntson, 1999; Lazarus, 1991). Positive emotions are generally thought to lead individuals to focus externally with the aim of promoting positive outcomes, whereas emotions with negative valence such as frustration could make individuals focus internally to prevent negative outcomes (Diener and Larsen, 1984).

In order to differentiate frustration from related emotions such as anger, other dimensions can be used. The valence-based approach could for example predict that emotions such as sadness, frustration, and fear, would exert similar influences on outcomes like customer satisfaction, loyalty, and problem-solving. However it could be expected that a person experiencing fear would face situations and solve problems and tasks differently from a frustrated person.

#### **2.4.1.2. Frustration activation and regulatory focus**

Frustration is an activated (or arousal) emotion (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) and it has been shown that at moderate levels of frustration an individual's capacity for complex thinking reaches its maximum (Young, 1973 in Spector, 1978) whereas at very low and very high levels of frustration an individual's capacity for complex thinking is lower. This could mean that frustration is an emotion whose purpose is to alert the individual that something is wrong in his or her environment, and prepares the person for renewed effort



and subsequent response. It also conveys the idea that very low levels of frustration may not be enough to push customers to exert additional effort to solve the problem at hand. Likewise, very high levels of frustration may impair cognitive activity and block customers from further exploring alternative solutions to their problem.

#### **2.4.1.3. Frustration and regulatory focus**

As mentioned previously, emotions are thought to have a role in either promoting or preventing action. Emotions like ‘peacefulness’ or ‘relaxed’ or boredom tend to inhibit action, or produce avoidance and possibly increase reflection, whereas emotions such as happiness, frustration or anger push the individual to act (Brockner and Higgins, 2001; Carver, 2004).

In summary, frustration can be classified as an activated and unpleasant emotion, associated to a promotion focus motivational orientation.

#### **2.4.2. Cognitive appraisal theory and frustration**

In order to understand the context of frustration in a call center encounter, appraisal theory is used to identify the possible appraisals that are made by people experiencing the emotion. In the following discussion several appraisal dimensions are discussed along with their relation to frustration. Then some possible outcomes of frustration are discussed which have been classified as adaptive and maladaptive.

##### **2.4.2.1. Frustration and goals blocked**

Frustration is a highly unpleasant emotion (i.e., a discrete and intense but short-lived affective experience in reaction to a stimulus) (Elfenbein, 2007) that occurs when a goal for which success is expected is blocked temporarily (e.g. a CCR may inform the caller that they have to wait for a week for a technician to arrive), or blocked permanently (e.g. the call center cannot solve one’s problem at all) (Spector, 1978). Thus, frustration arises when individuals find that what they expect differs from what they actually achieve.

#### **2.4.2.2. Frustration and effort**

Frustration is an emotion in which individuals anticipate expending considerable effort (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). According to regulatory focus theory, emotions may have either a promotion or prevention focus, which defines the motivational orientation inherent to the affective experience (Higgins, 1997). Negative emotions with a promotion orientation like frustration are elicited when desired goals are not achieved. The motivational orientation then pushes individuals to focus on and attend to the situation that caused the emotional state. Hence, frustration experiences can motivate individuals to exert more effort to overcome the obstacle that caused the frustration situation.

#### **2.4.2.3. Frustration and uncertainty**

Frustration is also an emotion linked to a high level of uncertainty regarding the causes of the frustrating event and the likelihood of goal attainment (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). Frustration can be present when there is high uncertainty about the process and goal achievement (Strebel et al., 2004), for example customers may feel unsure of how to get through to the right service.

#### **2.4.2.4. Frustration, control and responsibility**

The frustrating incident can be within or outside of individuals' control, such as the customer being unable to communicate his or her needs over the phone, or a storm causing a call center to lose one's records respectively. In frustration experiences, individuals usually feel that control over the situation lies in the hands of circumstances or chance, or other human agents (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985).

Similarly, attributions of responsibility for the frustrating incident could also heighten frustration (Gelbrich, 2010), although research is not conclusive in this respect (Van Mechelen and Hennes, 2009). Thus, it is still to be seen how relevant agency and attribution of responsibility are in consumer frustration.

#### **2.4.2.5. Frustration and time**

Another likely element accompanying frustration might be time. Phrases like “a growing sense of frustration” are often heard which seems to indicate that this emotion takes time to evolve, unlike “explosions” of anger or joy. Waiting time in services has been related to increased uncertainty and decreased control and has been shown to lead to higher irritation and annoyance (Hui and Tse, 1996), so it is highly likely that frustration will occur when waiting times are long.

To summarize, based on arguments from the appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1984), frustration states arise when an individual’s goal is blocked. It is a negative and intense – activated - emotion, with a promotion focus motivational orientation, moderate to high levels of uncertainty, situational control, and other-agent responsibility and control.

#### **2.4.3. Responses to frustration**

It has been suggested (Spector, 1975; 1978) that there are four responses to a frustrating experience: Anger arousal, problem-solving effort, aggression, and withdrawal. Based on a review of the frustration literature in the last three decades, this thesis proposes that frustration consequences may be better understood as adaptive or maladaptive responses.

##### **2.4.3.1. Adaptive responses**

Social functional theory states that even negative emotions have a functional purpose for individuals and communities (Keltner and Haidt, 1999). In this sense, frustration may trigger in individuals the motivation and effort to look for solutions to the frustrating event.

The mood-as-input model (Martin et al., 1993) is commonly used by researchers to explain why negative emotions may result in renewed persistence. Based on the idea that affective experiences provide individuals with information about their surrounding environment, the mood-as-input model states that negative emotional states inform individuals that something is wrong in a given situation (Martin et al., 1993). Hence, negative emotional states may lead individuals to display heightened efforts to change the situation.

Supporting this idea, some studies have shown that frustration may lead to increased cognitive persistence (Mikulincer, 1988), heightened effort (Carver, 2004), and renewed attempts to solve problems in service encounters (Gelbrich, 2010).

An alternative way to functionally cope with frustration is creativity. Drawing arguments from the mood-as-input model (Martin et al., 1993), it is also possible that frustration may help individuals generate novel and potentially useful ideas in response to a frustrating situation, a notion that has been suggested by some creativity researchers (Amabile et al., 2005).

Another response to frustration may also be increased loyalty if customers perceive that the company and/or the CCR react quickly to solve the frustrating situation. A few studies (Blodgett et al., 1993; Van Steenburg et al., 2013) suggest that companies which are able to adequately compensate customers for a negative experience resulting in frustration, may actually gain a loyal customer.

#### **2.4.3.2. Maladaptive responses**

A frequent response to frustration is aggression and hostility. Known as the frustration-aggression hypothesis and proposed by Dollard et al. (1939), it has been demonstrated that frustration can elicit the desire to act aggressively (e.g., Catalano et al., 1997; see Marcus-Newhall et al., 2000 for a review).

A second response to frustration is withdrawal (Campbell and Martinko, 1998; Martinko and Gardner, 1982). In terms of call center customers this response could be switching behavior, where the person withdraws from the frustrating encounter and goes to a competitor to receive the service they expect. Although research investigating frustration and loyalty is scant, a negative relationship between frustration and satisfaction has been found (Guchait and Namasivayam, 2012), and satisfaction has been negatively correlated with switching behavior (e.g. Athanassopoulos, 2000).

Another outcome of frustration is abandoning the initial goal depending on how important the goal is (Klinger, 1975). When the personal importance and relevance of the goal are low (Scherer, 1984), individuals may consider it less worthwhile to persist. Goal abandonment can also occur if perceived likelihood of goal achievement is low.

Another response to frustration is low satisfaction. Some research on customer service encounters has shown that frustration experiences may determine lower levels of satisfaction (e.g. Guchait and Namasivayam, 2012). Satisfaction occurs following an experience when people make a judgment about perceived discrepancies between initial expectations and actual outcomes (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991). To the extent that frustration is an emotion that occurs when goals are not achieved (i.e. expectations are not met) it is likely that frustration will be accompanied by dissatisfaction.

In summary, frustration can be conceptually linked to environments, events and interactions where goals are blocked in conditions of high uncertainty, other agent or non-agent control. Both adaptive and maladaptive responses to frustration are possible.

In the context of a call center setting the research question for study 3 is as follows:

**RQ3:** What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter?

*IQ3.1: What are the factors that give rise to emotions before calling a call center?*

*IQ3.2: What are the elements during a call center encounter that underpin the emotion of frustration?*

*IQ3.3: What are the elements that trigger adaptive or maladaptive responses to frustration after a call center encounter?*

## **2.5. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter involved a review of the literature of the fields of research relevant to this research. It provided a discussion of the definition of emotions and of the antecedents (appraisals of events) and consequences of emotions.

The next chapter presents a discussion of the philosophical considerations and the methodological approach linked to it in order to provide an answer to the research questions. It is divided into three sections each involving a presentation of the methodology (i.e. the aims, methods used, procedure, participants, analysis techniques and general results). Study 1, an exploratory research, is based on two studies (Study 1a and study 1b) which identify the emotions felt in a context of call center. The results of study 1 inform study 2 by providing a measurement scale for context specific emotions, used in the survey which aims to test the hypotheses 1-7 developed in this chapter. Study 2 contains a pilot test study (study 2a) and the main quantitative study (study 2b). Finally, results from study 2b lead to study 3 which focused on the emotional process in a call center context.

# Chapter 3. The Methodological Approach

Chapter 1 Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rationale for Studying Emotions in a Call Center Setting</li><li>• Research Objectives and Research Questions</li><li>• Summary and Conclusions</li><li>• Structure of the Thesis</li></ul>
Chapter 2 Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emotions</li><li>• Appraisal Theory</li><li>• The Appraisal-Tendency Framework</li><li>• Emotions, Satisfaction and Loyalty</li><li>• The Frustration Experience</li></ul>
Chapter 3 The Methodological Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pragmatism</li><li>• Mixed-Methods Approach</li><li>• Justifications for the Methodology</li><li>• Methodology for Study 1, Study 2 and Study 3: Aims, procedures, participants, analysis techniques and implications for later phases</li></ul>
Chapter 4 Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data Analysis</li><li>• Findings</li><li>• Summary of the Findings and Discussion</li></ul>
Chapter 5 General Discussion and Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall Discussion of the Findings</li><li>• Theoretical and Managerial Implications</li><li>• Limitations</li><li>• Areas for Future Research</li><li>• Conclusion</li></ul>



3.1. Introduction

This chapter involves the overview of the methodological approach based on philosophical considerations and of the research design. The thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach with three empirical studies.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, some epistemological assumptions are addressed. Then, an overview of the chosen mixed-methods approach is introduced. A summary of the overall research design is provided in the following part. A section for each study is then presented including the aims, methods used, procedure, participants and analysis techniques. Some general results are given to help understand the reasoning behind the move from one study to the other and each section then concludes with the rationale for the connection between the empirical studies. A summary of the structure of this chapter is presented in table 3.1.

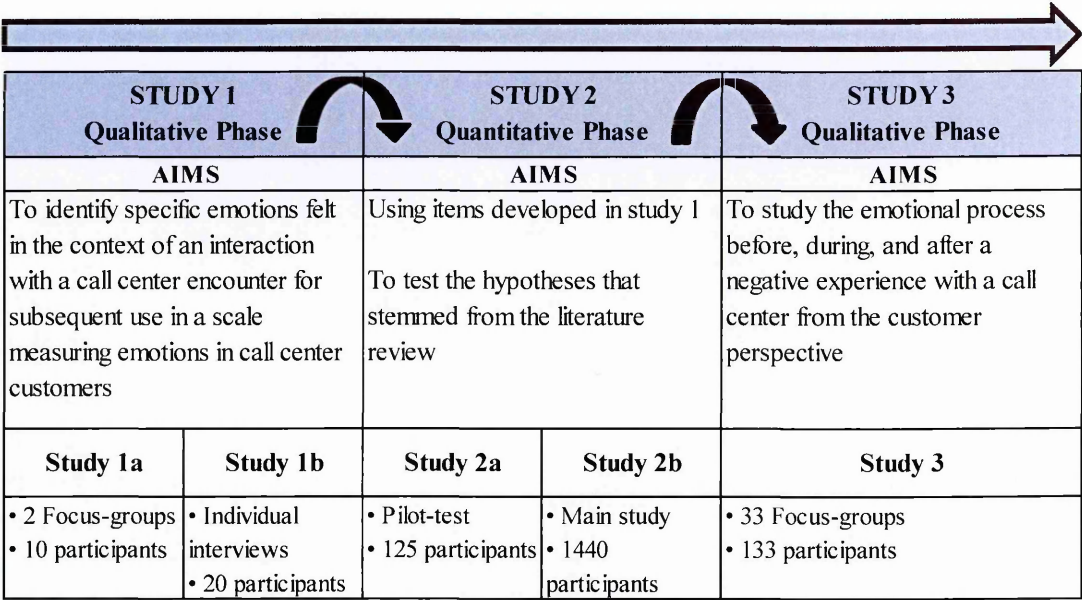
Table 3.1. Structure of Chapter 3

<div>Chapter 3</div> <div>The Methodological Approach</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Epistemological Approach</li><li>• Mixed-Methods Approach</li><li>• Overview of the Research Design</li><li>• Study 1: What are the emotions experienced by call center customers?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aims, method, procedure, participants, analysis, general results and implications for later phase</li></ul></li><li>• Study 2: What are the effects of positive and negative emotions on satisfaction and loyalty<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aims, method, procedure, participants, analysis, general results and implications for later phase</li></ul></li><li>• Study 3: What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aims, method, procedure, participants, analysis and general results</li></ul></li><li>• Summary of the Chapter</li></ul>
---	---



Figure 3.1 summarizes the research design process deployed across three empirical studies. It also presents the aims and the procedure for each study.

*Figure 3.1. Research Design Process*



### 3.2. Epistemological Approaches

The mixed methods approach is not linked to a single philosophy, since it incorporates both induction (discovery of patterns based on data analysis) and deduction (testing of theory and hypotheses) in its utilization. Instead it has been linked to pragmatism as its system of ‘philosophy’ (Creswell et al. 2003), which will be discussed in more detail further on.

Traditionally discussions in the marketing literature focus on positivistic and interpretive paradigms. The first of these assumes an objective view of reality in which research aims to measure, test and refute or support that view. The knowledge created through this paradigm is intended to provide general rules or laws which hold over time and in different samples (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). The interpretivist ontology assumes that reality is socially constructed and research within this paradigm seeks to understand human behavior and interpretations in their particular context. The results of research carried out in this

philosophy do not attempt to predict behavior or to provide generalizable rules, but to provide rich, in-depth understanding of a phenomenon at the particular time and place in an identified sample (Carson et al., 2001). A summary of the main assumptions of the two philosophies are presented in table 3.2.

**Table 3.2. General Differences between Positivism and Interpretivism**

<b>Metatheoretical assumptions about</b>	<b>Positivism</b>	<b>Interpretivism</b>
<b>Ontology</b>	Person (researcher) and reality are separate	Person (researcher) and reality are inseparable (life-world)
<b>Epistemology</b>	Objective reality exists beyond the human mind	Knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person's lived experience
<b>Research object</b>	Research object has inherent qualities that exist independently of the researcher	Research object is interpreted in light of meaning structure of person's (researcher's) live experience
<b>Method</b>	Statistics, content analysis	Hermeneutics, phenomenology
<b>Theory of truth</b>	Correspondance theory of truth: one-to-one mapping between research statements and reality	Truth as intentional fulfilment: interpretations of research object match lived experience of object
<b>Validity</b>	Certainty: data truly measure reality	Defensible knowledge claims
<b>Reliability</b>	Replicability: research results can be reproduced	Interpretive awareness: researchers recognise and address implications of their subjectivity

*From Hjørland (2005, p.140), adapted from Sandberg, published in Weber (2004, p.iv)*

In general positivism is associated with research that collects and analyses quantitative data, and interpretivism with research that collects qualitative data. In recent years there has been a growing acceptance in the marketing literature that the philosophical approach taken needs to match the needs of the research question rather than vice-versa. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) have proposed pragmatism as a suitable paradigm for conducting

mixed-methods research because their suggestion is that multiple paradigms can be used to address a research problem. The most important element is to focus on the research question and its consequences rather than on the methods or the data collection (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Pragmatism has been suggested as means of reconciling the opposition between the positivism and interpretivism (Denzin, 2012). There is little literature discussing the weaknesses of this paradigm, but it can be pointed out that it is not a philosophy exactly, since it focuses on real-world research problems, with epistemological and ontological considerations (of the nature of knowledge and the involvement or non-involvement of the person in that knowledge) coming second. It has been characterized by Denzin (1970, p.55) as follows: '*the pragmatic notion of reality is precisely that no theory of Reality in general is possible or needed*'. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) have suggested that when the pragmatic view is taken, it is sufficient to be explicit about when each of the positivist or interpretivist philosophies are used. This thesis is conducted in three main stages, a) an exploratory phase involving qualitative data collection and analysis for the building of a measurement scale; b) a descriptive phase where quantitative data is collected by means of a survey and analyzed using statistical methods for testing hypotheses and c) a follow-up qualitative study which offers further insight into the constructs and their relationships investigated in study 2. The first and third parts fall into an interpretivist paradigm and the second into the positivist philosophy.

Although there are still purists who argue that one or the other of the positivist or interpretivist paradigms produces the best results, a growing number of marketing studies in recent years have taken the pragmatic view, arguing that the flexibility of the methods that can be used in this paradigm can provide a fuller answer to a multitude of research questions posed (see Harrison and Reilly, 2011 for a recent review). This thesis, through its use of mixed-methods to approach the problem of the role of emotions in call centers takes the pragmatic view that multiple paradigms can provide the philosophical foundations for finding the answers to the research questions posed.

### 3.3. Mixed-methods Approach

This thesis adopts mixed-methods research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Davis et al., 2011) which uses both quantitative and qualitative data with the aim of providing a more complete understanding of the research problem than a single approach would (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie, 2003). The area of mixed-methods research is becoming more formalized following the early work of Denzin (1970) who identified methodological triangulation as a useful way to increase validity of results, noting that the use of different paradigms (i.e. quantitative and qualitative) produced better results since a weakness in one (e.g. quantitative) would be compensated for by the use of another (e.g. qualitative).

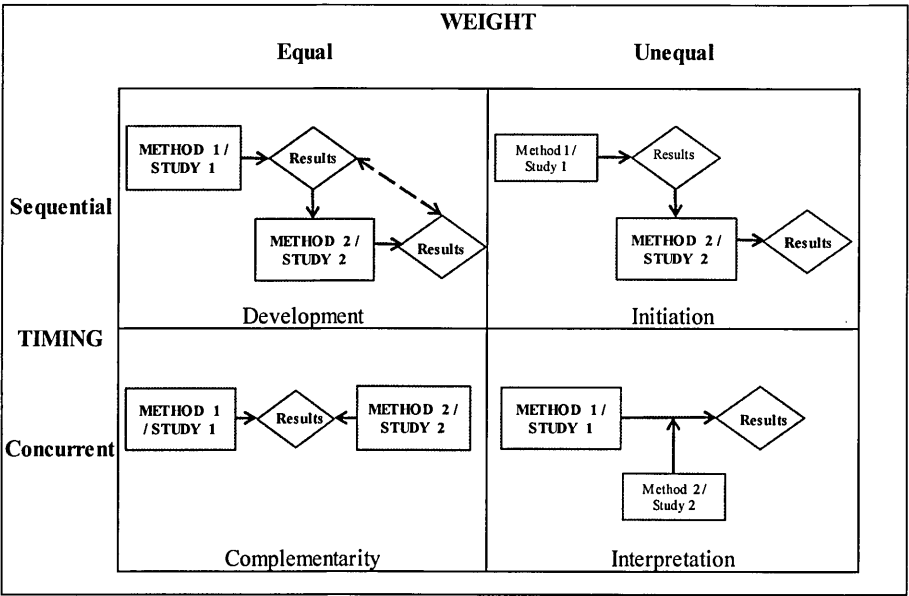
Mixed methods research combines notions of a) data types as qualitative and quantitative, b) the timing of the methods which can be concurrent or sequential c) the priority given to each data type and d) how the two data analyses are integrated. In this thesis, there are two primary reasons for using mixed-methods research. Firstly, in line with Greene et al. (1989) qualitative data collection and analysis (study 1) was considered to be an appropriate way to develop the scale deployed in the subsequent survey using quantitative methods (study 2), and secondly the final follow-up study (study 3) uses qualitative methods to provide more in-depth understanding of the results provided by the quantitative analysis and their particular context, the call center.

There are four decisions regarding the choice of the appropriate mixed-methods research. Figure 3.1 (Davis et al., 2011) illustrates these decisions. The first and most critical decision (Greene, 2007) is the level of interaction between the quantitative and the qualitative strands, whether they are independent or interactive. In this thesis, both methodologies are interactive since the qualitative study will inform the quantitative study i.e. instrument development, and the third investigation provides supplementary and contextual information about the results of study 2. The second decision is about the priority or weight given to the quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Study 1 is a

qualitative study whose aim is to lead to scale development in the quantitative study 2. Study 2 has a more important role in resolving the research problem as study 1 does. Study 3 is given equal weight to study 2 in that the results provide a separate and equally important contribution to the understanding of the research question. The third decision involves the timing of the two strands. This thesis adopts sequential timing where qualitative and quantitative strands occur in three distinct stages. The collection and analysis of quantitative data were carried out after the collection and analysis of qualitative data, and followed up by a third qualitative data collection phase as illustrated in the flow chart at the beginning of the chapter. Finally, the fourth and last decision concerns the point of interface between both methodologies. In this study, mixing occurred during data collection since qualitative results shape the collection of data in the second quantitative strand by developing the measurement instrument, and the final qualitative data analysed provide further information on the results obtained in the quantitative phase 2.

Davis (2011) illustrated the mixed methods design discussed above as shown in figure 3.2. In this illustration the relative importance given to each method in design is indicated in a square and sequences are indicated by the arrows.

Figure 3.2. Multiple Methods Design

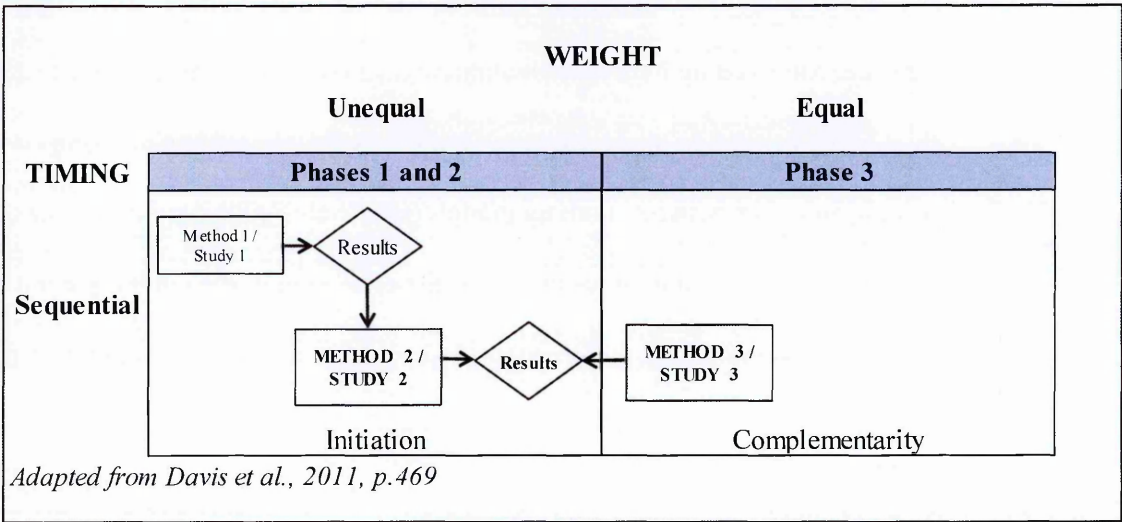


Adapted from Davis et al., 2011, p.469



In this thesis, study 1 uses an exploratory (qualitative) method which informs the more important study 2 using a quantitative method. Study 3 then contributes to the final overall results through qualitative data collection and analysis. Based on these key points, the mixed-methods research approach adopted in this thesis is initiation followed by complementarity as illustrated in figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3. Multiple Methods Design used in this Thesis**



### 3.4. Overview of the Research Design

Now the overall approach has been described, the reasons for choosing this design as well as the data collection methods are discussed here.

Even though research on emotions is a growing field of interest in marketing, scholars have demonstrated that emotions are context-specific (Richins, 1997). To date, no research on customer emotions in a call center setting has to our knowledge been published. It was therefore important as a starting point to check whether this was indeed a topic worth pursuing, i.e. do customers experience emotions during a call center encounter? If so, what are the emotions reported by call center customers when recalling a recent encounter?

Intuitively, and from an initial reading of the literature it seemed obvious that this would be the case, but a preliminary exploratory qualitative study was needed to provide some support for the notion. The first empirical study (study 1) is made up of an exploratory

phase consisting of 2 focus-groups (study 1a) and 20 in depth-interviews (study 1b). The aim of the exploratory stage is to identify specific emotions felt in the context of an interaction with a call center encounter for subsequent use in a scale measuring emotions in call center customers. Findings from study 1a and 1b therefore inform the second step of the research through the provision of context-specific emotions for use in a measurement scale deployed in study 2.

The aim of study 2 is to test the hypotheses that stemmed from the literature review about the relationships between emotions, satisfaction and loyalty. Finally, a third phase (study 3) follows up and focuses on the emotional experience through analyzing the emotional process which takes place during a customer call center encounter which was found from a theoretical point of view to be necessary in order to understand the role of emotions in a call center in more depth. The customer cognitive appraisals and emotions before, during, and after a call center encounter are investigated, and the contextual elements that underpin frustration, the dominant emotion found are identified. This phase was carried out using data from a large scale data collection exercise using 33 focus groups with a total of 133 participants.

The rest of the chapter reports on the details of the rationale and procedures used for each study in turn before making a few concluding remarks. The results are presented in chapter 4.

### **3.5. Study 1: What are the emotions experienced by call center customers?**

#### **3.5.1. Introduction**

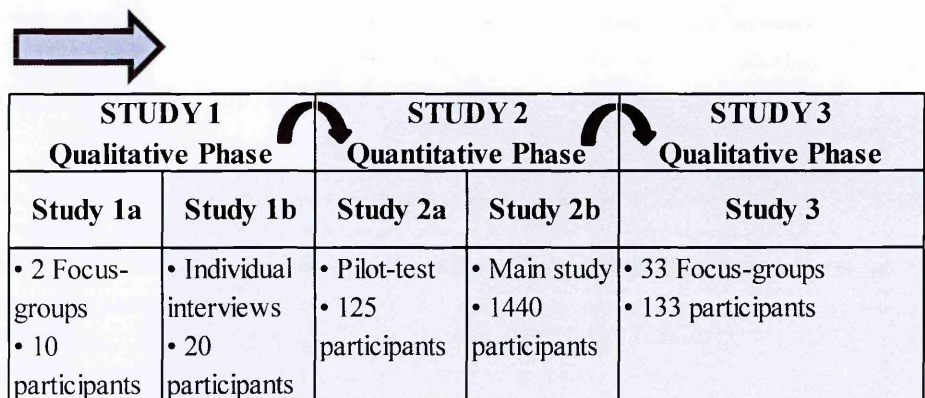
As discussed, the aim of study 1 was to generate items for an emotions measurement scale to be administered to customers of a call center in a subsequent study. There were two reasons for creating items rather than using existing scales such as PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) or DES (Izard, 1977):

1. The theoretical view by Barrett et al. (2007) was adopted that discrete emotions arise as a function of ‘conceptual structure that is afforded by language’ (Barrett et al., 2007, p. 304). In consequence the intention was to identify the emotions items in the language of the target respondents, i.e. in French from call center customers.
2. It has been suggested that emotions are context specific (Richins, 1997) and therefore it was necessary to evoke emotions specific to a call center environment by asking participants to recall their experiences.

Study 1 contains two qualitative stages. The first stage (study 1a) comprises two focus groups, each lasting one hour and a half. The second stage (study 1b) includes 20 individual interviews, each lasting between one hour and two hours.

### 3.5.2. Study 1a - Focus groups: Do customers experience emotions during a call center encounter?

Figure 3.4. Research Design Process - Study 1a



#### 3.5.2.1. Study 1a: Aims

The aim of study 1a was to carry out a preliminary exploration as to whether emotions were perceived as important by customers in a call center encounter. Since the literature on customer emotions in a call center encounter was non-existent, this phase was done simply to check that emotions are evoked in this context.



### **3.5.2.2. Study 1a: Method**

Focus groups were particularly appropriate for the aims of this stage of the research for several reasons. Firstly, the unstructured and informal nature of focus groups meant that emotions were more easily discussed (Malhotra, 2007) through the sharing of opinions and experience on a specific topic. Focus groups give the opportunity to encourage interaction within a group (Morgan and Krueger, 1993) which allows participants to produce data but also to facilitate exposure of their feelings about common experience and concerns (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Since the aim was to generate discussion of emotions, providing a research setting amenable to this purpose was of prime importance.

Some research recommends a size of 8-12 people per focus group (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2002; Fern, 2001), but other authors have suggested that good results can also be obtained with focus group sizes as small as two group members (Fern, 2001; Greenbaum, 2000). In this research, the first focus group was made of 3 participants and the second included 7 participants.

### **3.5.2.3. Study 1a: Procedure**

Since this was a preliminary exercise, the questions were left open, with ample scope for free discussion. The members of the focus groups were asked to describe “a recent experience with a call center”. The purpose of this description was not to identify elements within the experience that led to the emotion, but to cause the participants to plunge themselves back into the experience thus eliciting any emotions they felt during the encounter. They were then asked their opinions of call centers and their feelings after the call. The participants were encouraged to add any further input into the discussion that they felt relevant. The discussion guide is provided in Appendix 1. Each focus group was recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis.

### 3.5.2.4. Study 1a: Participants

Respondents varied in terms of age, gender and experience with a call center. In line with the recommendation of van Dun et al. (2011) participants had to have a recent experience with the call center (less than one week). Recruitment was based on purposive sampling using a personal network and the network in which the author works (institutional network). Table 3.3 provides information about the participants. Participants had had experiences with call centers of a banking company, insurance or mail-order sales. In total, 10 people - 4 males and 6 females - participated. The average age was 44 years old with a range from 25 to 60 years old.

*Table 3.3. Study 1a. Participants in focus groups*

Number	Focus group length	Gender	Age	Business Activity
1	1h32	Female	25	Bank
		Female	42	Mail-order sales
		Male	60	Bank
2	1h28	Female	47	Insurance
		Female	50	Bank
		Female	35	Mail-order sales
		Female	42	Mail-order sales
		Male	58	Insurance
		Male	43	Bank
		Male	38	Bank

### 3.5.2.5. Study 1a: Analysis

Focus groups were recorded with a handheld recorder, transcribed immediately following the session and coded using content analysis with NVivo 8.0. Transcripts in French of both focus groups can be found in Appendix 2 and their transcripts in English are reported in Appendix 3.

## ***Content Analysis***

Once data were collected, the next step was to organize the data. The chosen method in this thesis was content analysis. Content analysis is defined as ‘any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages’ (Holsti, 1968, p.608). Content analysis as a research method is an objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Krippendorff, 1980). An inductive approach (as opposed to a deductive approach based on previous knowledge (Strauss, 1987)) was used because there was no intention of using any particular theory for analysis at this stage, but simply to identify customer emotions in a call center context expressed semantically.

## ***The use of NVivo***

In order to conduct the content analysis and perform the coding procedure, the software NVivo 8 was used (Saldana, 2013). The *In Vivo coding* also labeled as ‘literal coding’ or ‘verbatim coding’ means that a code refers to a word or sentence based on the actual language used by participants themselves in their everyday lives (Strauss, 1987; Stringer, 1999). In view of the purpose of study 1a which was to elicit emotions based on semantics and other expressions used by participants, the *In Vivo coding* procedure was found to be appropriate and relevant.

More particularly, the data analysis followed five stages as illustrated in table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

Step	Key Features
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perform initial data coding, maintaining the integrity of 1st-order (informant-centric) terms</li><li>• Develop a comprehensive compendium of 1st-order terms</li><li>• Organize 1st-order codes into 2nd order (theory-centric) themes</li><li>• Distill 2nd-order themes into overarching theoretical dimensions (if appropriate)</li><li>• Assemble terms, themes and dimensions into a 'data structure'</li></ul>

Adapted from Gioia et al., 2012, p.12

First, the emotions and expressions of emotions based on the participants’ own terms were coded as first-order terms or “free nodes” on NVivo (e.g. ‘*I was frustrated*’ or ‘*I felt frustration*’). These were coded separately from contextual elements of the experience such as wait length or CCRs’ job characteristics. The latter elements were categorized and coded for the sake of a complete report of the analysis, but simply form a contextual background for eliciting descriptions of emotions.

There is abundant research on the verbal expressions of emotions which suggests that individuals can use several literal or figurative expressions to indicate what scholars consider to be equivalent emotions (Fussell, 2002; Ortony and Turner, 1990). For instance, somebody can say that he or she is ‘angry’, ‘irate’ or ‘irritated’ but conceptually these terms can be labeled into the same expression of anger (Fussell, 2002). Moreover, figurative expressions can also indicate emotions but can be interpreted differently by people from different cultures (Barrett et al., 2007; Kovecses, 2000; Mesquita and Kawaska, 2002), for example the phrase “*J’étais hors de moi*” translates as “*I was outside myself*” which could be interpreted as being distracted or inattentive but in fact means ‘*I was beside myself (with rage)*’ (e.g. Focus-group 2, Respondent 3 saying ‘*Moi, ça me met hors de moi ce genre de chose, dans une rage folle, je pourrai entrer en conflit comme dans une bagarre*’ translated as ‘*That sort of thing gets me beside myself, mad with rage, I could go into conflict, like in a punch-up*’. The coding of the French transcripts and

translation into English emotion words for this work was done by the author, a native French speaker with a good knowledge of English. The translation and interpretation was checked by a native English speaker (the author's supervisor) with a good command of French. Thus 74 free nodes were generated for the first step of the analysis.

Second, first-order terms were gathered in order to form a set of common terms. For example, free nodes such as '*I felt frustrated*' and '*It is a very frustrating situation*' were considered to have the same meanings and were put together (e.g. frustration). Free nodes were therefore used temporarily until more stable patterns are established, whereupon a more fixed set of nodes was generated.

Once the free nodes were organized as a set of common terms, the next step was to classify them into "tree nodes". These included six tree nodes categorized as wait length, CCRs' job characteristics, interactions with CCR, frustration, relief and powerlessness.

Finally, the second-order themes were assembled into 3 theoretical dimensions.

Powerlessness can be confounded with helplessness (Gelbrich, 2010) linked to uncertainty (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). Therefore rather than being an emotion *per se*, it is an element of cognitive appraisal of a stimulus and is considered as an indicator of a negative emotional state. Thus the three theoretical dimensions were a) contextual elements of emotions in a call center, b) positive emotions and c) negative emotional state (and not negative emotions).

Figure 3.5 provides an overview of the hierarchical organization of the six tree nodes and theoretical dimensions.



Figure 3.5. Study 1a. Organization of the Six Tree Nodes and Theoretical Dimensions

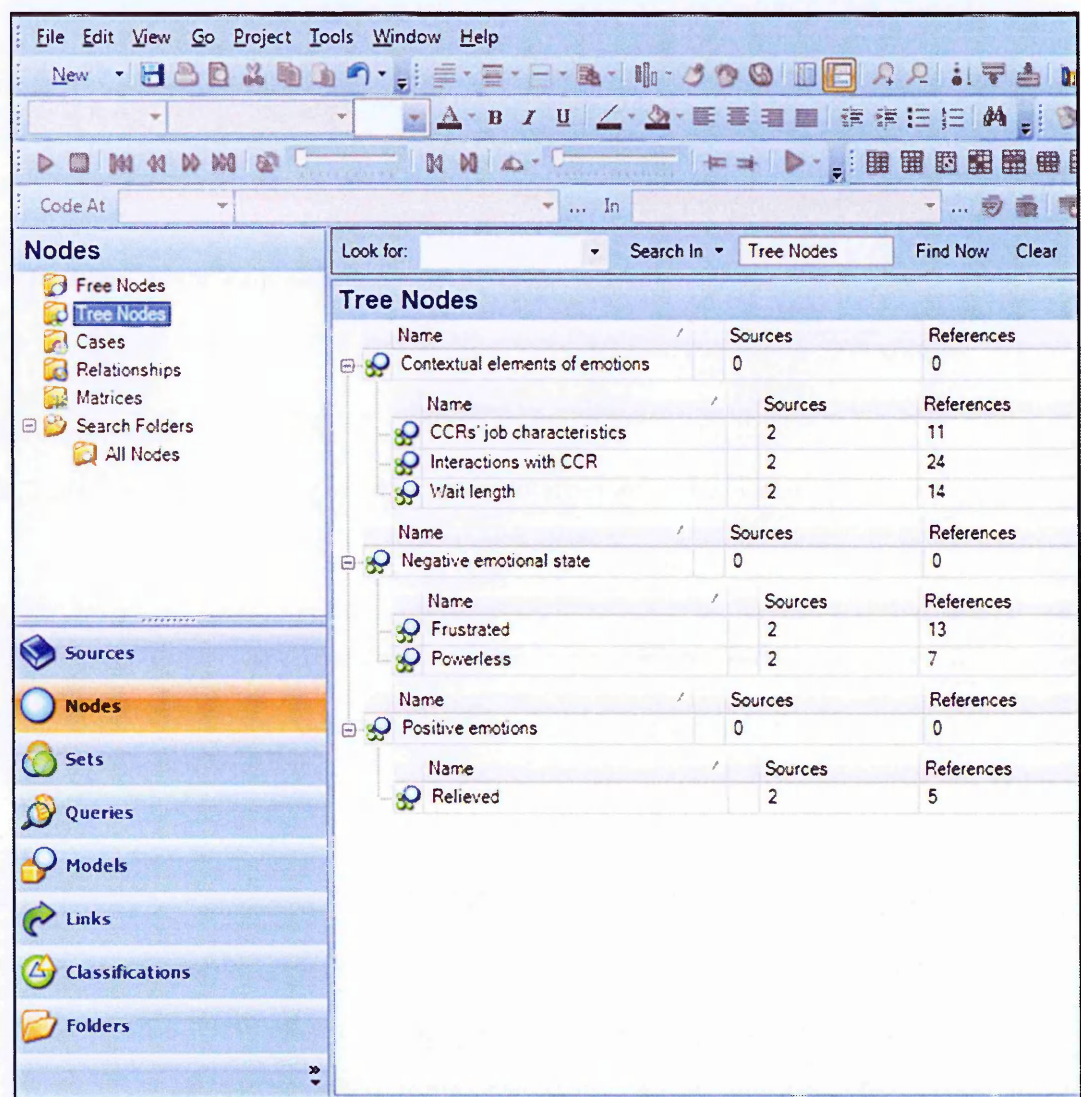


Figure 3.5 shows how nodes are classified. Contextual elements of emotions included 49 references (as terms, e.g. *'I always have to wait'*), positive emotions accounted for 5 references (e.g. *'I was very happy'*) and negative emotional state included 20 references (e.g. *'It was a frustrating situation'*).

Figures 3.6 illustrates the number of nodes and references for each focus group.

Figure 3.6. Study 1a. Number of Nodes and References per Focus group

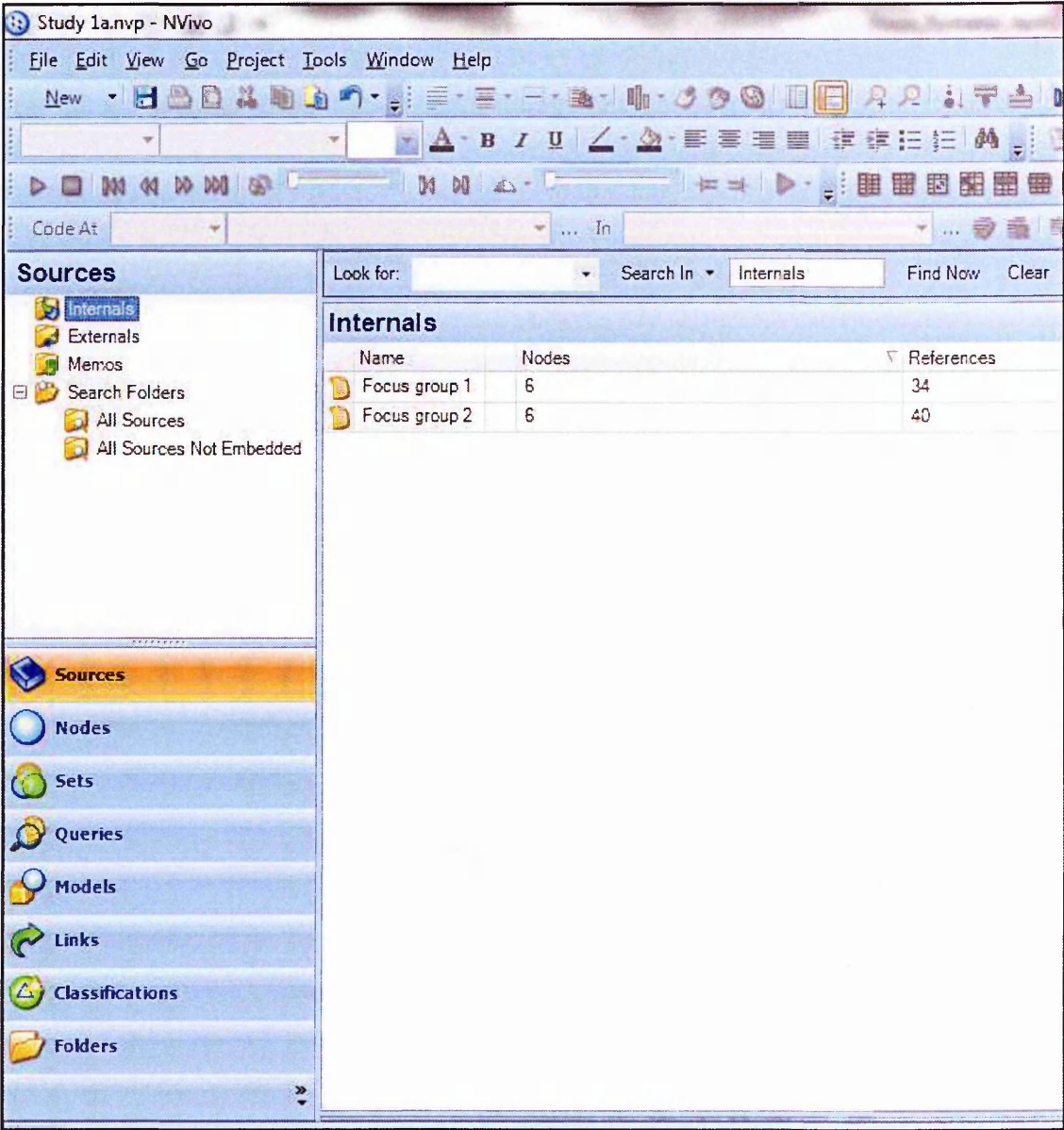


Figure 3.6 indicates that the six nodes are addressed in both focus group. The first focus group included less references (34) than the second one (40).

3.5.2.6. Study 1a: General results

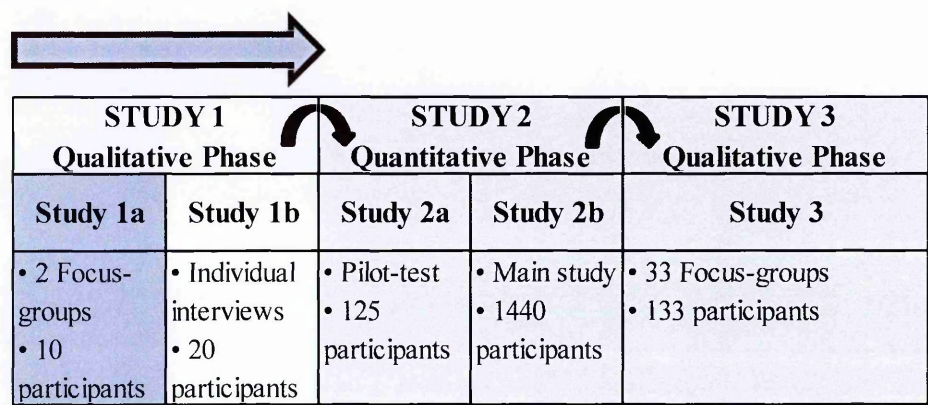
The results showed that emotions occurred during a call center encounter, were indeed important and therefore worth further research. The secondary output of this study also consisted of general impressions of the main factors that were considered of importance by the participants in their call center encounter. Details of the findings are provided in the next chapter.

3.5.2.7. Study 1a: Implications for later phases

Preliminary focus groups showed that customer emotions played a role in a call center context, and that certain emotions or indicators of an emotional state such as frustration, powerlessness and relief seemed to be generally experienced by the small group of respondents. The next step therefore was to generate text to identify a number of context-specific emotions using in-depth interviews described in the next section.

3.5.3. Study 1b - In-depth interviews: What are the emotions reported by call center customers when recalling a recent encounter?

Figure 3.7. Research Design Process - Study 1b



3.5.3.1. Study 1b: Aims

The aim of the in-depth interviews was to generate items for a scale for the measurement of emotions experienced by customers in a telecommunications company call center encounter in study 2.

3.5.3.2. Study 1b: Method

In-depth interviews are a direct and personal way to obtain qualitative information which has a many advantages, but also a number of weaknesses.

The first disadvantage can arise from a lack of interviewer expertise. The interviewer must be competent in the skills of how to 1) structure the guideline, 2) conduct an interview, and 3) analyze and interpret results. In order to overcome these potential weaknesses, the



following steps were taken. Firstly, the guideline was structured based on the method used and findings from study 1a which had worked successfully.

1. The guideline was structured to begin with a relevant and easily approachable subject which was simply to describe their call center experience, followed by more specific questions about their emotions, and then narrowing down to even more detail by asking about specific emotions.
2. Second, after each interview, a transcription was produced and reflection on whether any important or necessary points were missing took place. The author also tried to identify (through listening to the recording) where in the interview questions seem to have been misunderstood, or where interviewees seemed uncomfortable, in order to improve her interviewing skills in the following interview.
3. The analysis and interpretation of the data was done with guidance from the literature as outlined in the data analysis procedure described in this chapter.

Despite these disadvantages, in-depth interviews present three principal strengths. First, they uncover a wide range of individual insights whereas focus groups generate collective ideas (Morgan and Krueger, 1993). Second, it is easier to identify a respondent's particular answer. Finally, there is no social pressure in in-depth interviews which encourages free exchange and open discussion (Malhotra, 2007).

In-depth interviews were found to be appropriate regarding the aim of study 1b as to the generating items for a scale containing a number of context-specific emotions. This technique allows individuals to re-live the actual experience without interruption in a single flow of story-telling during which the emotions felt during the recalled encounter re-surface and can thus be captured by the researcher.

#### **3.5.3.3. Study 1b: Procedure**

A semi-structured interview guideline was developed with the aim of allowing respondents to speak freely of their encounter with the call center, and to elicit the emotions felt.

Interviews occurred in the author's office and lasted between one hour and two hours. The discussions focused on and were limited to experiences related to participants' telecommunications service provider, which is the sector in which data from the main quantitative study were collected.

In the first, unstructured part, the interviewees were asked to recount a recent experience with a call center, causing them to re-live the experience and to recall their emotions in their own words.

The second part was more structured and was used if the respondents had not spoken spontaneously about their emotions during their initial narration. The direction of the interview depended on the respondent's answers. This part consisted of four questions asking about 1) the emotions they had felt after the call, 2-4) whether they had felt frustration, powerlessness or relief (the emotions and indicators of an emotional state reported by the focus group participants in study 1a). Finally, the interviewees were asked if they had anything further to add. The interview guideline can be found in Appendix 4.

#### **3.5.3.4. Study 1b: Participants**

Since one goal of the research is to elicit narration of emotions across individuals who have had the same call center encounter, the recruitment of participants was based on people who had a recent experience with a call center in the telecommunication industry.

In order to compare and contrast their experience, respondents varied in terms of age and gender (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Other than these two criteria, recruitment was based on purposive sampling using personal and institutional networks. 20 people – 9 males and 11 women participated. The average age was 42 years old ranging from 24 to 62 years old. The demographic details as well as interview length are shown in table 3.5.

*Table 3.5. Study 1b. Participants in in-depth interviews*

Number	Length	Gender	Age
1	1h00	Male	56
2	58min	Female	48
3	1h58	Male	54
4	1h02	Male	52
5	1h05	Female	42
6	1h52	Male	30
7	1h00	Female	27
8	1h02	Female	35
9	1h14	Male	48
10	1h15	Male	62
11	1h17	Female	47
12	1h45	Male	58
13	1h20	Female	24
14	1h54	Male	29
15	1h08	Female	28
16	53min	Male	45
17	1h05	Female	36
18	59min	Female	61
19	1h06	Female	56
20	1h05	Female	43

The sample size was determined by when data saturation was achieved (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

After the 18<sup>th</sup> in-depth interview, no new data in regard to emotions or indicators was generated. In other words, all the emotions and indicators of an emotional state described by the participants were easily coded into the seven emotions and indicators displayed in table 4.7 and no new emotions and indicators were forthcoming. This indicated that saturation had been reached, and therefore data collection was stopped.

The in-depth interviews were recorded with a handheld recorder and transcribed immediately following the session in preparation for coding using NVivo version 8.0. A selection of 3 in-depth interviews transcripts in French is reported in Appendix 5. A translation in English of these 3 selected in-depth interviews is provided in Appendix 6.

For reason of length full data in the form of word-processed transcripts is available in a separate document for inspection.

#### **3.5.3.5. Study 1b: Analysis**

Similarly to study 1a, content analysis was performed using NVivo and the *In Vivo coding* procedure was also carried out (Saldana, 2013). The analysis method used was the same as that for the focus groups described previously. In other words, interviews were transcribed and a first round of content analysis was performed in order to identify terms used after each transcription. In this way, identification of recurring terms and those used less frequently was possible concurrently with the data collection.

Data was coded into free nodes and then organized hierarchically into tree nodes. At the end of the analysis, study 1b included 131 nodes classified into 7 tree nodes (happy, relieved, frustrated, powerless, angry, stressed and discouraged) and 2 theoretical dimensions (positive emotions and negative emotional state).

One of the limitations of qualitative study involves the subjectivity of the researcher. Therefore in order to strengthen the reliability of data and as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994), parallel coding was effected on 4 in-depth interviews by a professor in strategy and management. The inter-coder reliability, which refers to the amount of correspondence among two or more coders, shows a satisfactory level of 89% (Bartunek and Rynes, 2010). Similarly to the focus group results, in order to check the correct translation from French in English for the purposes of reporting results in this work, all translations of expressions of emotions were checked by a bilingual native English speaker.

Figure 3.8 provides an overview of the organization of the tree nodes for study 1b.

Figure 3.8. Study 1b. Organization of the Tree Nodes and Theoretical Dimensions

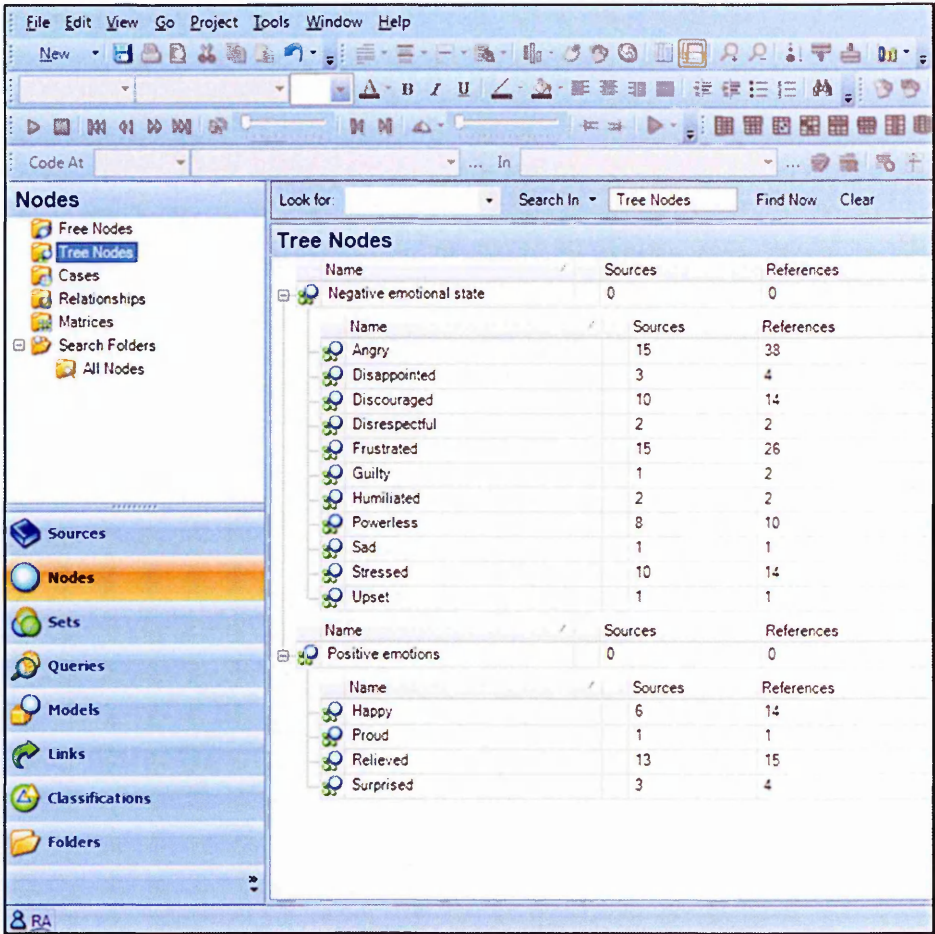


Figure 3.8 illustrates the organization of the tree nodes and the number of references (as terms or expression of emotions, e.g. *'I was frustrated'* or *'I was angry'*) for each tree node. In a first place, 4 nodes for positive emotions and 11 nodes for negative emotional state were identified. However, as indicated in this figure, references for the following tree nodes were not relevant: proud, upset and sad (1 reference), guilty, disrespectful and humiliated (2 references), and disappointed and surprised (4 references). Moreover, these nodes appeared in few interviews (e.g. the tree node 'surprised' was found in 3 interviews - termed as sources in NVivo - out of 20 and the others were addressed in no more than 3 interviews).

In contrast, happy included 14 references (in 6 interviews out of 20), relieved accounted for 15 references (in 13 interviews), powerless concerned 10 references (in 8 interviews), discouraged and stressed included 14 references each (in 10 interviews each), frustrated

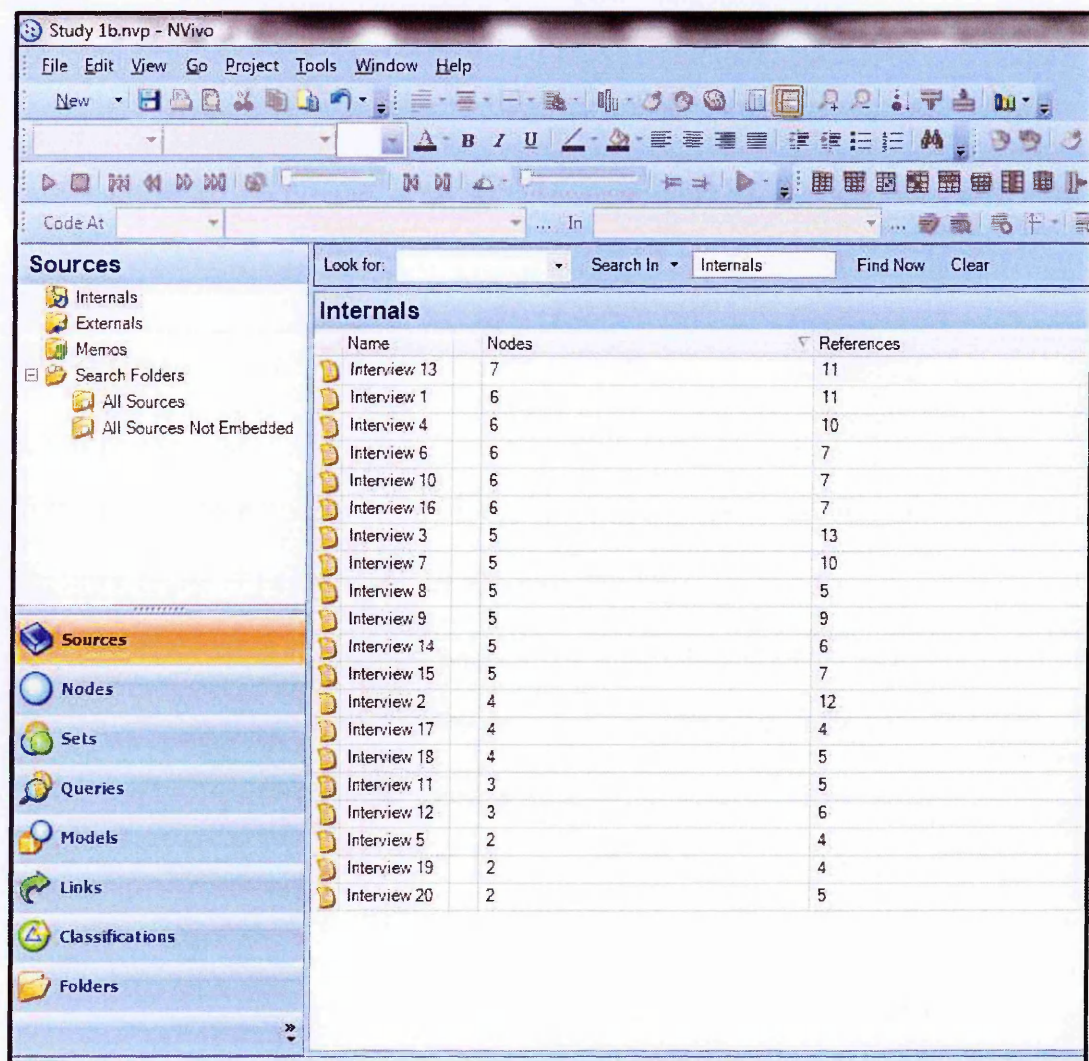


involved 26 references (in 15 interviews) and angry accounted for 38 references (in 15 interviews).

Based on these results, the author decided to keep these seven nodes: happy and relieved (positive emotions) and angry, powerless, frustrated, discouraged and stressed (negative emotional state). The analysis of the findings is developed in chapter 4.

Figure 3.9 reports the number of nodes and references (emotions terms) for each in-depth interview.

**Figure 3.9. Study 1b. Number of Nodes and References per Interview**



As indicated in figure 3.9, in-depth interviews are ranked according to the number of nodes they include. Some in-depth interviews included more nodes than other (e.g. the 13<sup>th</sup>

interview included 11 references and accounted for 7 nodes out of the 15 identified whereas the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview dealt with 2 nodes and 5 references).

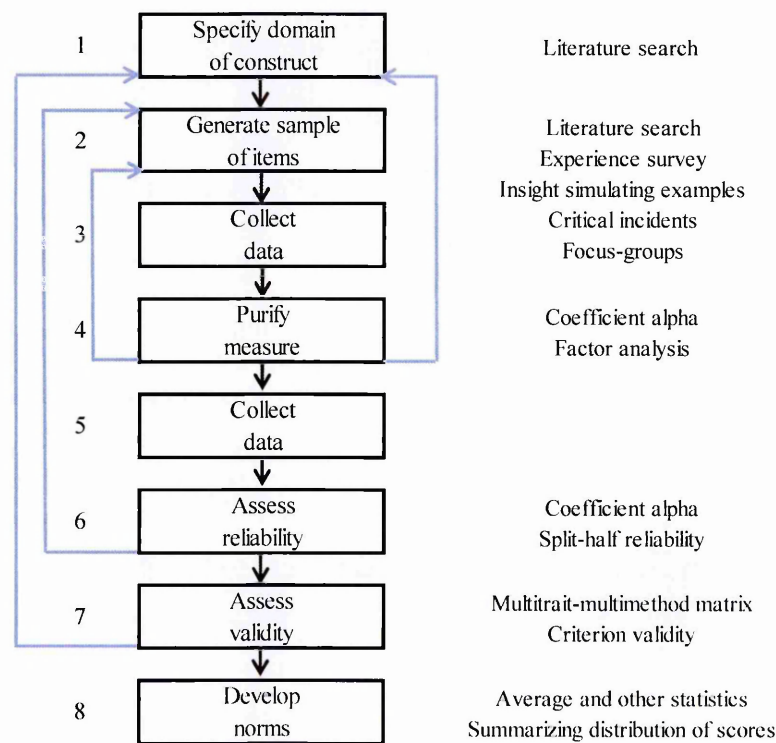
**3.5.3.6. Study 1b: General results**

Following the analysis, seven principal indicators of emotions were identified and defined as being of particular relevance in a call center setting. These were the positive emotions of happiness and relief together with the negative emotional state of frustration, anger, powerlessness, discouragement and stress. The data structure was identified and is displayed later on in chapter 4 (see table 4.7).

**3.5.3.7. Study 1b: Implications for later phases**

The indicators of emotions presented briefly above were then used in a call center customer emotions scale that was tested and then deployed in a full scale survey in study 2.

**Figure 3.10. Procedure for Developing Measurement Scale**



*From Churchill (1979, p. 66)*

In this study, the construct domain (emotions) was established from the literature review in that the classification of emotions into positive and negative emotional state dimensions was done (Richins, 1997) and that it was felt necessary to obtain emotions and indicators of emotions specific to a call center encounter (Barrett et al. , 2007). The sample of items (phase 2 in figure 3.10) was generated using study 1 described in this section.

Phases 3 to 8 were developed across study 2 and more particularly **study 2a** whose aim was to collect data, purify the measure and assess reliability and validity using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The procedures used for pre-testing and pilot testing the emotions scale as well as the other constructs used in this thesis form the subject of the coming sections.

### **3.6. Study 2: What are the effects of positive and negative emotions on satisfaction and loyalty?**

#### **3.6.1. Introduction**

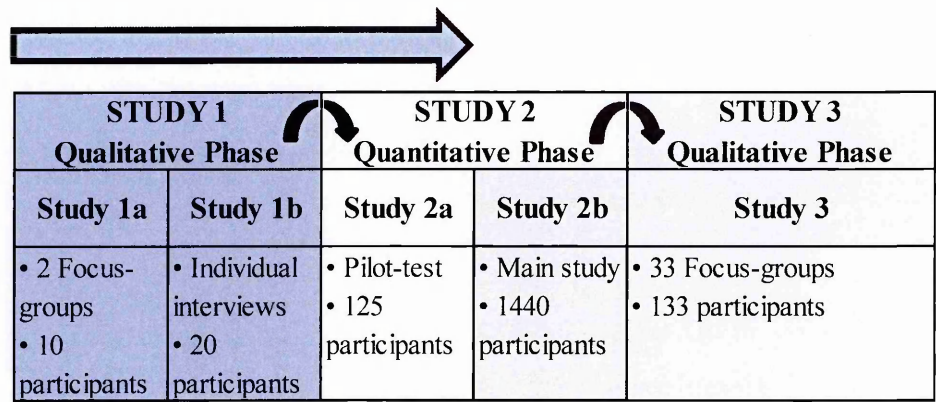
The objective of study 2 was to test the hypotheses developed from the theory discussed in chapter 2 through the use of statistical methods. These hypotheses related to the relationships between customer emotions, satisfaction and loyalty in a call center setting. The study was carried out in two steps. The first (study 2a) concerns the development of the measurement instrument (e.g. questionnaire format, items and testing), with the subsequent results regarding the validity and reliability of the measurement scales.

The second step (study 2b) concerns the main study, a survey of 1440 customers of a French call center, and how the data were collected and analysed.



**3.6.2. Study 2a: Development of the measurement instrument –Are the scales valid and reliable?**

*Figure 3.11. Research Design Process - Study 2a*



**3.6.2.1. Study 2a: Aims**

The objective of study 2a was to create a questionnaire which appropriately measured the constructs of interest, namely emotions, loyalty and satisfaction along with other relevant variables discussed below. In order to ensure validity and reliability of the results, the constructs and scales need to undergo pre-testing to ensure adequate clarity of wording and linguistic validity and then pilot testing to ensure scale reliability and construct validity (Malhotra, 2007).

**3.6.2.2. Study 2a: Method**

Before pilot testing a measurement instrument, care must be taken that the questionnaire is suitable for administration to the pilot-test sample. Pretesting aims at identifying and avoiding potential problems at the pilot-test stage. A pretest must be conducted with a sample similar to the sample of the final study in terms of participants' background information, knowledge of the topic and interest. Within these theoretical considerations, pretesting provides two main advantages. It permits the researcher to test the meanings of the questions, the wording and to see participants' reactions to questions. Debriefing and discussion between the researcher and participants ensures a high level of understanding of

the questions. This is a crucial step since a lack of understanding or willingness to complete the questionnaire can lead to the collection of poor-quality data.

Once the pretesting phase is complete, pilot-testing can provide a first insight of potential results through statistical analysis with respect to construct reliability and internal validity, thus ensuring that the final study provides results that are reliable and valid (Malhotra, 2007).

### **3.6.2.3. Study 2a: Procedure**

#### ***Step 1- Measurement***

The first step was to develop the questionnaire using scales from the literature review and emotions identified in study 1a and b. The items used in the questionnaire concerned several variables, not all used in this thesis for reasons of space and focus but to be used in future research as discussed in the reflective report accompanying this document. Those variables measured but not used in the analysis were: *perceived waiting time in minutes*; *perceived waiting time in comparison to expectations*; *appraisals of the wait in terms of feelings* and *personality*.

The variables measured and retained for use in the analysis presented in this thesis are as follows:

**1. Positive emotions and negative emotional state:** These are the independent variables developed in study 1. Positive emotions are made up of 2 items, *happy* and *relieved* and negative emotional state includes 5 items which are *frustrated*, *angry*, *discouraged*, *stressed* and *powerless* anchored following Izard (1977) with *Not at all*, *a little*, *moderately*, *a lot* and *Extremely*. The measurement scale consisted of a five-point Likert scale since this is sufficient for it to be statistically treated as an interval scale (Johnson and Creech, 1983) and some authors suggest that using a seven-point or a nine-point Likert scale can offer participants too many response choices which could generate difficulty to

choose an answer for respondents due to cognitive limitations (Parasuraman, 1991). The question preceding the scale read ‘Please describe the intensity of feelings you had during the phone call’.

**2. Satisfaction:** The initial measurement consisted of two items on the basis of scales used in previous studies and fairly widely accepted (Burns and Neisner, 2006; Oliver and Swan 1989), which were ‘*Overall, how close did the phone call come up to your expectations?*’ with scales ranging from 1-5 on a 5-point Likert scale anchored by ‘*much poorer than expected*’ to ‘*very much better than expected*’ and ‘*Considering everything, how satisfied are you with the phone call experience?*’ with end-points of ‘*very dissatisfied*’ and ‘*very satisfied*’.

On further reflection on the theoretical implications, it became clear in the context of this study that it was necessary to move away from the definition provided by Oliver (1981, p.42) ‘*the emotional reaction following a disconfirmation experience which acts on the base attitude level and is consumption-specific*’ for two reasons:

1. To avoid overlap of the satisfaction measurement with the measurement of emotions
2. To avoid the measurement of unmet expectations, since this is a core feature of the cognitive appraisal elements of negative emotions i.e. an appraisal of ‘goal consistency’ where expected goals are not met (see Watson and Spence, 2007).

For this reason and in line with Rust and Chung (2006) only one item considered sufficiently neutral was kept for the final analysis: ‘*Considering everything, how satisfied are you with the phone call experience?*’ with end-points of ‘*very dissatisfied*’ and ‘*very satisfied*’. In addition, Szymanski and Henard (2001) claim that using such an aggregate

measure is better than alternative means since respondents can develop their own criteria in the response they provide.

**3. Loyalty:** The measurement of loyalty is based on previous research in call centers (Dean, 2002; 2004; 2007). The scale was initially developed and refined by Zeithaml et al. (1996) and was confirmed in previous studies (Bloemer et al., 1999; Dean, 2002; 2004; 2007). It involves five items including word-of-mouth and recommendation items *'I am likely to say positive things about this company to other people'*; *'I would recommend this company to someone who seeks my advice'*; *'I would encourage friends and relatives to do business with this company'*; attitudinal loyalty *'I consider this company my first choice to buy the appropriate services'*; and conative loyalty *'I am likely to do more business with the company in the next few years'* on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1='strongly disagree' to 5='strongly agree'.

In addition to the main constructs to be measured in the study, three other variables were measured to provide insight into the make-up of the sample and for descriptive purposes.

**4. Reasons for call:** In inbound services, the role of the CCR is to respond to customers' inquiries such as providing specific information, producing customer support, billing, taking orders, making reservations, managing complaints, providing pre-sale and post-sale services, giving technical support and other types of calls for both consumer and business clients (Doyle and Carolan, 1998; Jack et al., 2006; Jaiswal, 2008; Miciak and Desmarais, 2001; Moshavi and Terborg, 2002; Sergeant and Frenkel, 2000). In this study, there were five reasons for the call: (1) *Technical Assistance*, (2) *Line activation*, (3) *Account Management*, (4) *Claims*, (5) *Ask for information*.

**5. Alternatives:** Call centers provide multi-channel means of communication (Adomaitiene and Slatkeviciene, 2008; Ahghari and Balcioglu, 2009; Jack et al., 2006). Participants were asked to express the alternative they would have used to cope with their

complaints or wish if they had the choice. Based on an open-ended scale, possible answers were 'In-store', 'Email', 'Internet', 'Chat', 'Postal letter' based on previous research (Adomaitiene and Slatkeviciene, 2008; Ahghari and Balcioglu, 2009; Jack et al., 2006).

**6. Sociodemographic data:** These are measured with category questions (Gilbert and Churchill, 1991; Saunders et al., 2003). Questions are about respondents' *gender, age, educational background and profession* (van Dun et al., 2011, p.1353).

### ***Step 2. Ensuring clarity of the measurement instrument***

The second step was to ensure **valid translation** of both of the scales taken from the literature into the language of the respondent and to check for **clarity of wording** for loyalty, satisfaction and emotions generated from studies 1a and 1b.

### **Back-Translation**

According to Schaffer and Riordan (2003), semantic equivalence fosters the validation of the research instrument. Items must have the same meaning whatever the respondents' culture. In this research, scales and items are informed by previous literature developed for English-speaking people. Since participants in this research were French, it was necessary to pay attention to the semantic equivalence to assure the validity of the research instrument. Even though researchers and linguists set up a common version of their work, there might be differences in meaning from one version to another. This issue can have a negative impact on the interpretation of the findings (Holtzman, 1968).

Therefore, to reduce semantic inconsistencies and to maximize understanding, the original measurement was translated using the back-translation procedure. The instrument was translated from English to French and then back again to English (Ortega and Richey, 1998). Following Brislin's (1970) and Geisinger's (2003) recommendations, two different French/English bilingual language experts and one university professor in research methodology translated the instrument. One of the experts translated the original items into

French and the other back-translated the items into the English language. The university professor made sure of the translation and back-translation with regard to the research objectives. Finally, the back translated items were discussed with both bilingual experts concerning their accuracy with regard to the original version before the final version was pre-tested.

### **Pre-test – clarity of wording**

Following back translation, the final questionnaire was pretested twice by administering the questionnaire to a small sample of respondents to identify and eliminate potential problems (Malhotra, 2007). The first pretest was carried out with a group of ten French respondents. The participants were asked to explain what they understood after the reading of the questionnaire, to describe the meaning of each question, to mention any difficulties and to make any suggestions they wanted (Fink, 1995; Malhotra, 2007). Based on participants' comments, a revision of the questionnaire was done. Then, a second pretest was carried out with a sample of fifteen French people. This stage was effected for a) confirming the understanding of the items from a qualitative perspective, b) making sure that the question wording was understandable and to check questionnaire flow, c) verifying how the questionnaire was received by respondents since there are some personal and emotion-based questions, and d) checking the time needed to fill in the questionnaire. Respondents did not make any supplementary comments regarding the questionnaire at this stage.

When this step was completed, the research shifted to the pilot-testing stage.

### ***Step 3. Pilot -Testing***

The questionnaire was then put online using moodle, and administered to a sample of respondents to check construct validity and scale reliability. The sample (N=200) received

the questionnaire via an email with a link to an online survey. Respondents were asked to think about a recent experience with a CCR and to answer the questions.

### **Study 2a: Pilot Test Participants and Sample Size**

A convenience sample for the pilot test stage was selected from a personal and institutional network. An e-mail was sent to 423 contacts to ask when their last encounter with a call center had taken place.

200 of them responded that a short period of time (less than one week) had passed since their last contact with an inbound call center, which guaranteed that customers would base their answers on their recent experience and not on their perceptions (Burgers et al., 2000, p.150; van Dun et al., 2011, p.1351). However, since it was difficult to have access to call center customers of one specific company at this stage, participants had experience with different types of inbound call centers from diverse business sectors. Out of the 200 people to whom the questionnaire was sent 125 responded, i.e. a response rate of 62.5%. This high response rate can be explained by the relative ease with which respondents could be contacted and encouraged to fill in the questionnaire. Many respondents were personally known to the author, contact information such as e-mail addresses and phone numbers were available for the rest of the sample, and since these respondents were linked to the higher education institution where the author works, they took the exercise seriously, and did not assume they were receiving spam.

Everitt (1975) and Nunnally (1978) suggest ratios of 10 participants per indicator and a sample size of at least 100 for testing of construct validity through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The structural model in this thesis is made up of 12 indicators. With 125 respondents and 10 cases per indicator the sample was therefore of appropriate size for EFA to be undertaken.

### **Study 2a: Pilot Test Analysis**

Three tests were run on the data collected from the pilot test using SPSS version 21.0.

**Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)** was carried out on the emotions and loyalty scales to check the underlying structure of these constructs and to test which items needed to be retained or discarded in the full study. **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)** was also undertaken in order to verify the suggestion in the literature that the emotions construct consists of both positive and negative valence dimensions. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Tests were used to measure the sampling adequacy and to test the overall significance of all correlations within a correlation matrix. In this thesis, KMO scores are above the recommended 0.5 and Bartlett score are high with a significance level below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2010).

**The internal reliability** of the constructs was tested using Cronbach alpha. Even though there is no standard concerning the alpha level, most scholars agree that an alpha value between 0.70 and 0.95 is acceptable (Hair et al., 2010; Nunnally, 1978; Nunally and Bernstein, 1994; Peterson, 1994).

**The construct validity** was tested using CFA through factor loadings and variance. Factor loadings and variance for emotions and loyalty constructs are respectively above 0.5 and 60% as the recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2010).

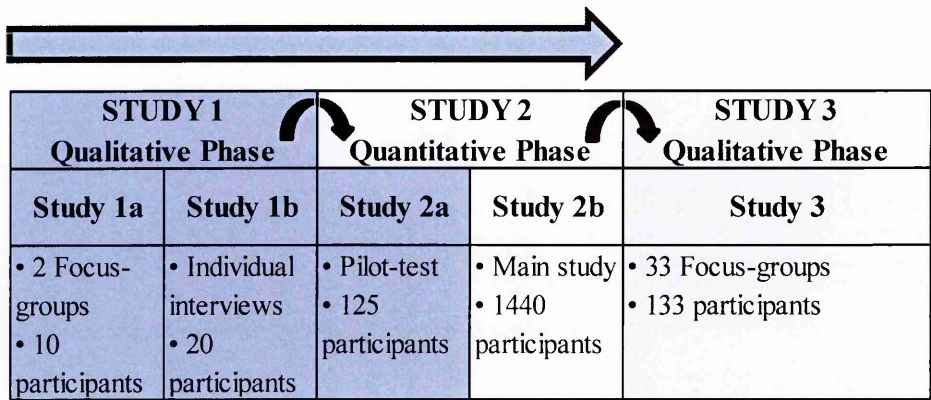
### **Study 2a: Pilot Test General Results and Implications for Study 2b Full Scale Survey**

The pilot study results were all satisfactory in terms of construct validity and scale reliability, and no changes were necessary to the scales developed or chosen from the literature. In consequence, the measurement instrument was now ready for use in the full-scale study.



**3.6.3. Study 2b: Hypothesis Testing and Structural Equation Modeling**

*Figure 3.12. Research Design Process- Study 2b*



**3.6.3.1. Study 2b: Aims**

The aim of study 2b was to collect and analyse data from a sufficiently large sample of the target population, customers of a call center in order to test hypotheses 1-7 arrived at through the literature review and to test the proposed model displayed in figure 3.13.

**3.6.3.2. Study 2b: Method**

The method used in this study was a questionnaire-based survey. The survey method is the most common method of primary data collection in marketing research (Malhotra and McCort, 2001). This method offers four advantages. First, a questionnaire is easy to administer. Second, as answers to questions are limited to alternatives proposed the reliability of data collected is ensured. Third, the variability in the results due to differences in participants is minimized because of the use of fixed-response questions. Finally, it is relatively simple to code, analyze and interpret data (Crosby et al., 2002; Malhotra, 2007). However, this method also presents drawbacks that may be caused by respondents who do not give desired or accurate information. Respondents may be unable to answer (e.g. they do not know what to answer) or do not voluntarily provide the right information (e.g. sensitive or personal questions).

In this thesis, in order to avoid potential problems, to encourage the completion of the whole questionnaire and make it simple, the questions were pre-tested as described previously and were sequenced according to the normal course of a phone conversation as described in the next section.

### **3.6.3.3. Study 2b: Procedure**

The questionnaire developed in the study 2a was formatted to allow its use by the head of market studies at the call center under study. The questionnaire was administered in the following order:

The first part consisted of a message explaining the reason why individuals had received this questionnaire (as a customer who recently called the company call center), the fact that the questions were about this particular call, information on the respect of anonymity and indications on how to fill in the questionnaire (Dean, 2004).

In order to guide respondents and to obtain their confidence (Schaefer and Dillman, 1998; Dean, 2004) the question ordering was designed to make the flow of the questionnaire easy to follow. Questions were therefore sequenced according to the course of a phone conversation. It started with a question with regard to the reason for call (five reasons such as technical assistance, line activation, account management, claims, and ask for information). The next section included questions which involved customers' opinions before reaching a CCR (perceived waiting time and appraisal of the wait). Subsequently questions about the emotions felt during the phone conversation were asked followed by an evaluation of their satisfaction. Finally, questions were asked to measure loyalty.

The primary objective of this study was to collect information on customers' experience with the call center as outlined above. Since customer personality has no direct link with the call center experience *a priori*, it was more relevant to put questions about personality at the end of the questionnaire (these items are not used in the analysis but are mentioned here to provide a complete picture of the process). The last section of the questionnaire

involved socio-demographic questions including the respondent's gender, age, professional background and education.

In order to improve the guidance of respondents, specific techniques were used (Malhotra, 2007). For instance, identifiers of where to situate the questions during the encounter such as 'Before the call' or 'Let's talk about your satisfaction regarding the wait' were included in the core of the questionnaire. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 7.

To respect the confidentiality of data and customers' anonymity, the company itself downloaded their names and email addresses. Data were collected by sending out the survey link by email with the responses automatically downloaded into an excel file. Although email surveys have the disadvantage of generating a low response rate, the following reasons explain why this procedure was appropriate:

- Since the company performs its own marketing surveys, customers are accustomed to answering surveys and interacting with the company via email for this purpose
- Since customers were asked to give their opinion of a telephone encounter, designing the survey via telephone may have led to biased results (Burgers, 2000; Dean, 2004).

The questionnaire was sent to the person in charge of statistics and surveys at the organization. This person was the intermediate between the researcher and the customers and managed all the process for collecting data. The questionnaire was approved by the company and no modifications were made.

In order to circumvent the drawbacks of an email survey and to increase the response rate, two techniques were used:

- The appearance of the platform was designed to ensure clarity in the survey,
- The sample of customers was approached via an email sent by the company itself with a link to an online survey and a personalized message. Dillman (1978; 1991;

2007) used this technique for mail surveys but explains that it is also applicable to email surveys (Schaefer and Dillman, 1998, pp.380-381). With this approach customers feel more valued and are more willing to answer the survey (Schaefer and Dillman, 1998). The message was as follows:

‘Dear XXX, You recently contacted the XXXX support line. We would very much appreciate your feedback on this call. Simply click on the following link to complete a brief questionnaire on your call: <http://aaaaaaaaa>. We thank you in advance for your time and valuable insight and for placing your trust in XXXX. Best regards, XXXX’.

#### **3.6.3.4. Study 2b: Participants**

The total number of Internet subscribers of the company is around 5 million<sup>1</sup>. From this large population, the target population identified was every customer who had telephoned the call center in the week preceding the study, comprising 19 600 customers.

To reach this target population, the company downloaded the names and email addresses of all the customers who had used their call center within the previous week in order to guarantee that customers would base their answers on their recent experience (Burgers et al., 2000, p.150; van Dun et al., 2011, p.1351). The aim was a) to ensure respondent’s ability to base their responses on the particular experience rather than to obtain a general view of call centers (Burgers et al., 2000, p.150), and b) to collect their emotions while the encounter was still fresh in their minds.

The questionnaire was sent to **all 19 600** customers. Data was collected from 31 January to 4 February 2011. After five days, the questionnaire was removed from the platform since 1538 respondents had already completed the questionnaire. No reminders were sent.

---

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.iliad.fr/finances/2012/CP\\_151112.pdf](http://www.iliad.fr/finances/2012/CP_151112.pdf)

The speed of response is in line with previous studies which indicate that email response speed ranges from five to ten days (Bachmann et al., 1996; Kiesler and Sproull, 1986; Schaefer and Dillman, 1998; Weible and Wallace, 1998).

The response rate of 7.8% is quite low. However, previous studies indicate response rate for email survey around 30% (Sheehan, 2001) or even ranging from 6% (Tse et al., 1995) to 75% (Bachmann et al., 1999; Kiesler and Sproull, 1986).

After cleaning and eliminating cases with missing data, 1440 questionnaires comprised the final sample whose responses were kept to confirm the structural model and test the hypotheses in the main quantitative study. The sample size was much larger than required for structural equation modeling, where decisions on sample size are based on considerations of normality of distribution, estimation techniques, model complexity and average error of variance of the indicators. The resulting needs in terms of sample size for the analysis is generally  $N=200 - 400$  but larger samples are considered suitable as long as the appropriate fit statistics are used, avoiding the sample size dependent chi-squared statistic (Hair et al., 2010).

### *Sample bias*

In order to draw inferences from a sample to the whole population, it is suggested that non-probability random sampling is used (Yeager et al., 2011). This technique is based on having a complete and up to date sampling frame, and selecting cases from the population based on random numbers until the calculated sample size is achieved.

Despite having access to a complete sampling frame (database of customers), random sampling was not possible a) due to the fact that only customers with recent experience were targeted for the particular purposes of this study and b) ensuring full response from a sample pre-selected using random number generation would have been lengthy with no guarantee of response. The result was that from the total target population contacted, those who chose to respond were not necessarily representative of the population of call center

customers, and may have had experiences, either positive or negative that led them to wish to answer. It should be noted here that many marketing studies use non-probability samples, for example students, and this is acceptable if the aim is to test theoretically based hypotheses rather than to test frequencies in a population accurately (Yeager et al., 2011). In a paper on the comparison of probability and non-probability sampling methods in telephone and internet surveys, Yeager et al. (2011, p.737) state that *“The continued use of non probability samples seems quite reasonable if one’s goal is not to document the strength of an association in a population but rather to reject the null hypothesis that two variables are completely unrelated to one another throughout the population. If a researcher’s goal is to document the frequency distribution of a variable in a population accurately, non-probability sample surveys appear to be considerably less suited to that goal than probability sample surveys.”*

In view of this statement, it is suggested that although probability sampling was not possible for this thesis, the sample is appropriate for the analysis (hypothesis testing) to be effected. In addition, on testing for the distribution of the variables used in the analysis, all variables were found to show normal distributions, indicating that sufficient variability in the measures themselves (high, medium and low levels of emotions, satisfaction and loyalty) was achieved.

#### **3.6.3.5. Study 2b: Analysis**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Amos version 21.0 was carried out using the data after initial descriptive analyses were effected with SPSS version 21.0.

The use of SEM had three functions. The first was to specify the indicators of the main constructs, emotions and loyalty and to assess construct validity. The second was to represent the interrelationships of the variables, in other words the structural model links independent variables (IV) to dependent variables (DV) (Hair et al., 2010). The final

function allows the researcher to assess the relative contributions of the negative and positive emotions (IV's) to both satisfaction and loyalty (DV's).

The advantages of using SEM are that measurement errors are not estimated in traditional multivariate procedures whereas they are in SEM. This reduces inaccuracy in estimations of the regression coefficients. The second advantage is that its use allows the study of theoretical constructs that cannot be observed directly. These are latent variables (or factors or unobserved variables) which are measured by observed variables (or indicators). Therefore, covariances between indicators are used in SEM to estimate the regression (Hair et al., 2010).

Statistical models in SEM consist of describing the latent structure underlying a set of observed variables. The aim of this kind of model is to provide information on the relationship between the observed and unobserved (latent) variables via equations. This is a 2-step process. First, the model fit has to be evaluated. Second, the model needs to be tested to verify whether or not the hypotheses are supported.

### ***Covariance versus correlation***

In the past, debates arose about the use of a covariance as compared to a correlation matrix as input (Hair et al., 2010). This study will use covariance input for several reasons that have been explored by Hair et al. (2010) and Malhotra (2007):

- Statistical properties of covariances minimize errors in standard errors computations
- Covariances allow better comparisons between samples if required
- Since covariances contain greater information, these will provide the researcher more flexibility

### ***Estimation technique***

Once the model is specified, the next stage is to select the estimation method. In another word, the aim is to choose the most appropriate mathematical algorithm to make estimations for each parameter.

The Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) has been selected for its own features:

- MLE is ‘more efficient and unbiased when the assumption of multivariate normality is met’.
- Thanks to its flexibility, MLE leads to the best model fit.
- It provides robust results whatever the circumstances (i.e. non-normality of the data) (Hair et al., 2010; Malhotra, 2007).

The MLE method is less sensitive to sampling error, more accurate in its parameter estimates and provides overall fit tests that are statistically well-founded (Fan et al., 1999).

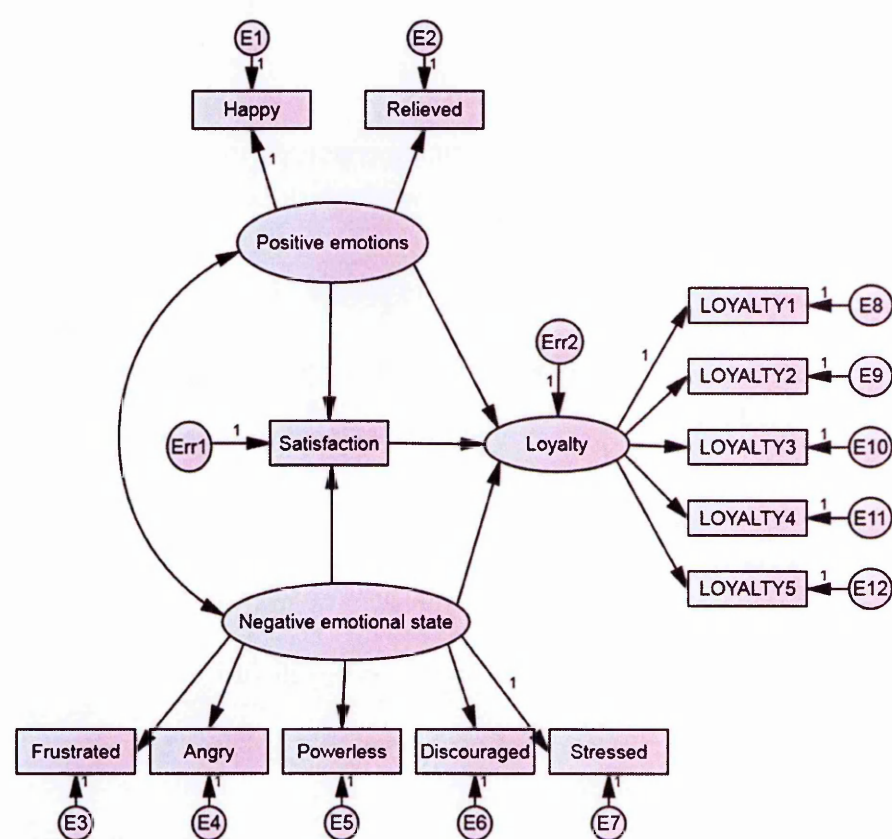
### ***Model construction***

Figure 3.13 illustrates the structural model and incorporates details of indicators and error terms. There are three latent variables: negative emotional state, positive emotions and loyalty and one observed variable – satisfaction, consisting of a single indicator. The independent variables are constructed as follows. negative emotional state consists of five indicators, *frustrated, angry, powerless, discouraged and stressed*. Positive emotions consist of two indicators, *happy and relieved*. The dependent variable of loyalty consists of five indicators described in the measurement section above. The double-headed arrow between these two factors shows a correlation, the single headed arrow indicates a relationship between an independent and dependent variable and the small circle represents the error terms.



Emotions and loyalty as higher-order constructs (Jarvis et al., 2012) were modeled as reflective constructs in which direction of causality is from constructs (e.g. positive emotions) to items (e.g. happy) and therefore indicators are manifestations of the construct (Jarvis et al., 2003). The reflective approach was found appropriate since at the measurement level a) indicators should be interchangeable and should share a common theme, b) the degree of covariation among items within each dimensions is high; and c) indicators should have the same antecedents and consequences as suggested by Jarvis et al. (2003, p.203).

**Figure 3.13. Study 2b. Structural Model and Relationships between Variables**



**3.6.3.6. Study 2b: General results**

Construct validity and scale reliability were confirmed through statistical analysis. All the hypothesized relationships were supported, and acceptable fit statistics were obtained for

the overall model indicating that emotions have a significant impact on both satisfaction and loyalty.

### **3.6.3.7. Study 2b: Implications for later phases**

One of the more interesting findings was that the relative contributions of positive emotions and negative emotional state differed depending on whether satisfaction or loyalty was the dependent variable. In addition negative emotional state had a stronger effect on loyalty than on satisfaction. A full discussion of the findings is provided later in this thesis. However, these results made it clear that in order to understand why negative emotional state had these differing effects, despite the well-established satisfaction-loyalty relationship (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Oliver, 1997) further study was needed.

In other words, emotions play an important role in both satisfaction and loyalty, but the mechanism by which this takes place needs further elaboration. For this reason, and from a consideration of the theoretical background of emotions discussed in the literature review it was decided to proceed to a final study (study 3) to understand the customer emotional process that takes place during a negative call center-customer encounter.

For the purposes of study 3 therefore, the indicators of negative emotional state generated from study 1 together with the mean scores for these indicators from the sample in study 2 were considered. The highest means on a scale of 1 to 5 were for powerlessness (3.29), discouragement (2.99) and frustration (2.94) followed by anger (2.8) and stress (2.69).

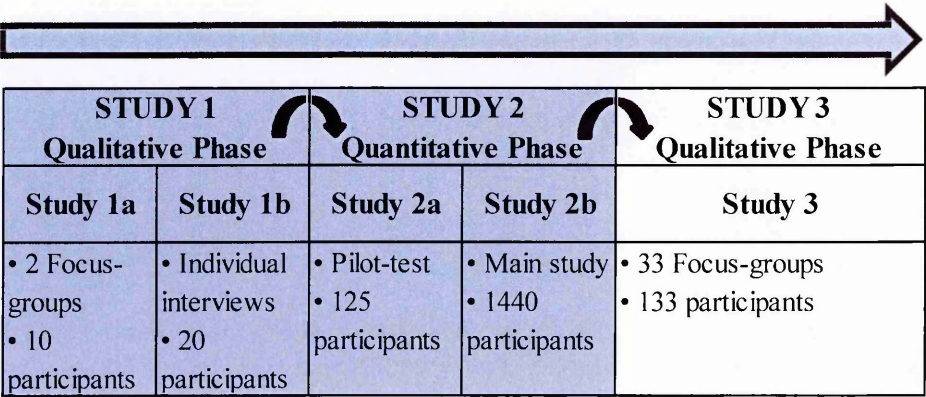
From a theoretical point of view, cognitive appraisal tells us powerlessness can be confounded with helplessness (Gelbrich, 2010) linked to uncertainty (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). In other words rather than being an emotion *per se*, it is an element of cognitive appraisal of a stimulus. Similarly, discouragement can be conceptualized as an outcome of an emotional experience synonymous with withdrawal (Spector, 1978). Stress forms a large body of research related to the medical and psychological reactions to stressors (see

Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) which falls outside the scope of this work. The remaining indicators of a negative emotional state with the highest means were anger (2.8) and frustration (2.94). Anger has been studied fairly comprehensively in the past and its mechanisms are understood (Gibson and Callister, 2010). Of particular interest from a theoretical point of view was the indicator with the highest mean, frustration. Frustration had also been mentioned by several studies of customers in utilitarian services and call centers in particular (Bennington, 2000; Gelbrich, 2010; Guchait and Namasivayam, 2012; Peevers et al., 2009; Tronvoll, 2011) but had not formed the subject of any in-depth study using the emotional process as a theoretical basis (Barrett et al., 2007; Elfenbein, 2007).

The third study therefore investigated the emotional process of customers of a call center during a call center encounter and specifically focused on and developed the theoretical framework for frustration, although all emotions and related cognitive appraisals were analysed.

### 3.7. Study 3: What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter?

Figure 3.14. Research Design Process - Study 3



#### 3.7.1. Introduction

Study 3 was carried out from September until December 2013 in order to gather supplementary qualitative data to provide a more in-depth understanding of the role of emotions, in particular frustration in a call center encounter. For this purpose focus groups

with student participants were used. Cognitive appraisal theory (Frijda, 1986), was drawn upon to provide the conceptual framework for data collection and analysis.

### **3.7.2. Study 3: Aims**

The aim of study 3 was to study the emotional process before, during and after a negative experience with a call center including emotions and their cognitive appraisal elements of goals, uncertainty, control and responsibility. Furthermore, the outcomes arising from the emotional experience were also investigated.

### **3.7.3. Study 3: Method**

An exploratory research approach was deemed appropriate to investigate emotional experiences in the particular context of call centers due to the scant amount of research in this area. Data were collected using focus groups, a useful method when there is a need to strengthen the understanding of a phenomenon (Calder, 1977; McDonald, 1993) with data from a relatively large number of people and to encourage the generation of ideas to obtain complex descriptions and details that one particular individual might not have considered.

### **3.7.4. Study 3: Procedure**

For each focus group session, participants were asked to describe “a negative experience in a call center”. The word “frustration” was intentionally omitted from the initial part, so as not to bias participants in any way during the early stages of the discussion. Moderation was carried out by postgraduate students at a French business school, with a second student present to take notes, prepare logistics and to record the session. The student moderators were trained in a one-hour preparation exercise in order to ensure homogeneity in approach.

Participants were then guided by the moderator to describe their experience before, during, and after the call. For each of these three stages, participants were also asked about their feelings and reactions. The moderator’s instructions guide is provided in Appendix 8. The

protocol was pre-tested on two students to check that the questions were understandable and that relevant responses were generated.

A discussion guide was created to ensure that each participant narrated their experience and that the following discussion covered the entire call center encounter. Each focus group was audiotaped to facilitate transcription. The discussion guide is in Appendix 9.

### **3.7.5. Study 3: Participants**

Data were collected in a French business school. Thirty-three focus groups ranging from 3 to 5 participants who had had a negative experience with a call center were conducted, each lasting between 20 and 30 minutes. There were 133 initial participants. Out of these, 12 were excluded because their narratives were unintelligible, or because they did not refer to a particular call center experience. The final sample was then 121, 83 of whom were women (62%), all holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. Most participants were French (63 %) and their age ranged between 20 and 25 years. Prior to data collection, participants were instructed on the methodology and the general purpose of the study, and assured confidential treatment of all data. Transcripts of a selection of 3 focus groups are reported in Appendix 10 for reasons of length as for study 1b. Full transcripts are available in a separate document.

### **3.7.6. Study 3: Analysis**

Theoretical thematic analysis was used following the procedure suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), in order to provide insights into underlying latent themes rather than generating new ideas or theory. Thus, a series of initial underlying themes were used based on cognitive appraisal theory (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985), these being goals, uncertainty, control, and emotions together with two other themes for the research purposes of this thesis: adaptive and maladaptive responses. These themes were subsequently developed through coding of events and responses for each theme as well as the emotion associated with them. For each focus group a common memo sheet was used to note ideas for initial

coding, subsequent code changes, to comment on issues arising and for reflective remarks. Verbatim extracts were attached to each code to illustrate meanings and were subsequently refined, combined or separated into sub-categories as analysis continued. Eight transcripts were coded in parallel by the author, her supervisor and a colleague at the business school in order to ensure consistency in coding.

Since the aim was to study the progress of emotions, in particular frustration during the call, the analysis was structured to study the individual narratives of the three stages before, during and after the call. Each narration contained the aim of the call, the emotion felt at each stage, appraisal of the incidents before and during the encounter and the reactions at the end of the call. The themes and categories identified for each stage were then either collapsed or divided according to whether there was enough data to support them. The three analyses were finally revised again by the author and checked by her supervisor to ensure homogeneity of coding. Table 3.6 shows a list of the themes used in the final analysis.

**Table 3.6. Study 3. Definition of Themes and Categories used in Analysis**

Definition of Themes	Categories
<u>Goal Importance</u> : Goal blocked has financial, time or emotional consequences	<i>High; Medium; Low</i>
<u>Goal Blocked</u> : A goal blocked before or during the call	<i>Yes; No</i>
<u>Goal Achieved</u> : Customer achieved their goal	<i>Yes; No; Satisfactory Alternative</i>
<u>Uncertainty</u> : Unsure about goal achievement or process	<i>Goal uncertainty; Process uncertainty; Confidence; Language; Time</i>
<u>Control</u> : Whether or not customer controls the process/goal achievement	<i>Automatic Responses; Multiple Transfers; Repetition; Limited choice; Forced sales; Financial</i>
<u>Responsibility</u> : Attribution of blame	<i>Self; Company-incompetent; Company-hostile; Employee-incompetent; Employee-hostile</i>
<u>Adaptive Response</u> : Positive reaction after the emotional experience	<i>Searching for alternative means to goals; support seeking; persistence; loyalty</i>
<u>Maladaptive Response</u> : Negative reaction after the emotional experience	<i>Aggression; negative word of mouth; switching behavior; withdrawal from the process; spurious loyalty</i>
<u>Emotion</u> : The emotion felt at the 3 stages of the encounter	<i>Frustration; Anger; Anxiety; Neutral; Happiness</i>

The data were also crossed and counted in order to gain some insights into the prevalence of the themes and to identify issues for certain subsets of the sample.

### 3.7.7. Study 3: General results

The results showed that various emotions were felt at the beginning of the call, and that during the call frustration was generated by goals blocked and accompanied by appraisals

of high uncertainty, low control and that agency (usually the CCR) exacerbated frustration. The outcomes of frustration were both adaptive and maladaptive. High spurious loyalty was seen with many participants expressing the fact that they stayed with the company because alternatives were limited.

### **3.8. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter involved the methodological approach and the philosophical considerations underpinning the research design for the three empirical studies. It also provides methodological justifications and descriptions of procedures across the three studies.

The next two chapters concern the analysis of the findings of each empirical study as well as the research and managerial implications. The aim is to show the contribution of each study in order to identify which emotions and indicators of an emotional state occur in a call center setting, how they impact satisfaction and loyalty and finally to describe the emotional process in such a context.



# Chapter 4. Findings

Chapter 1 Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rationale for Studying Emotions in a Call Center Setting</li><li>• Research Objectives and Research Questions</li><li>• Summary and Conclusions</li><li>• Structure of the Thesis</li></ul>
Chapter 2 Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emotions</li><li>• Appraisal Theory</li><li>• The Appraisal-Tendency Framework</li><li>• Emotions, Satisfaction and Loyalty</li><li>• The Frustration Experience</li></ul>
Chapter 3 The Methodological Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pragmatism</li><li>• Mixed-Methods Approach</li><li>• Justifications for the Methodology</li><li>• Methodology for Study 1, Study 2 and Study 3: Aims, procedures, participants, analysis techniques and implications for later phases</li></ul>
Chapter 4 Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data Analysis</li><li>• Findings</li><li>• Summary of the Findings and Discussion</li></ul>
Chapter 5 General Discussion and Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall Discussion of the Findings</li><li>• Theoretical and Managerial Implications</li><li>• Limitations</li><li>• Areas for Future Research</li><li>• Conclusion</li></ul>

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the three studies carried out for this thesis. The first investigation, study 1, consisting of two preliminary focus groups and twenty in-depth interviews with call center customers confirmed that emotions are present and play a role in call center encounters. The major context-specific indicators of emotions found from the qualitative analysis in study 1 were frustration, anger, discouragement, stress and powerlessness, relief and happiness.

The findings indicate that some variables used to describe ‘negative emotions’ are not emotions *per se* (e.g. powerlessness and discouragement) but indicators of a negative emotional state. Therefore in the methodology section terms as ‘indicators of emotions’ and ‘negative emotional state’ are used. However since hypotheses stemmed from the literature review, the term ‘negative emotions’ was kept in the presentation of the hypotheses.

Frustration, anger, discouragement, stress, powerlessness, relief and happiness were used in an emotions measurement scale based on that of Izard (1977) together with an existing scale for loyalty by Zeithaml et al. (1996) and a satisfaction measure to investigate the relationship between a negative emotional state, positive emotions, satisfaction and loyalty in study 2. The hypothesized relationships between these constructs were supported by the results from a study of 1440 customers of a single call center in France.

The structural equation modeling of these relationships revealed that positive and negative emotions affect satisfaction and loyalty to different degrees, with a strong positive relationship observed between positive emotions and satisfaction, and a somewhat weaker negative effect of negative emotions on satisfaction. Furthermore, it was found that negative emotions decrease loyalty more than positive emotions increase it.

In order to understand the full emotional process which includes emotions, cognitive appraisals and their outcomes a third qualitative study, study 3 was undertaken using

thirty-three focus groups with a total of 133 student participants who had had a negative experience with a call center. In line with the literature in utilitarian services and call center services (Bennington, 2000; Gelbrich, 2010; Guchait and Namasivayam, 2012; Peevers et al., 2009; Tronvoll, 2011) and results from studies 1 and 2, where frustration is observed as a major indicator of a negative emotional state, the focus of this study was on frustration.

The results showed that a variety of emotions or indicators of emotions were experienced by callers before the call, and that most experienced frustration during the encounter, mainly due to perceptions of goal blocking, uncertainty and reduced control together with attributions of responsibility to the company or the CCR. The outcomes of frustration were mainly maladaptive (switching or ‘spurious’ loyalty) but some adaptive behaviors were also observed (persistence, finding alternative means to solve the problem).

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows: first the results for studies 1a and b, the scale building exercises are presented. Then the results of the pilot testing stage and the full-scale survey phase are given. Finally the results from study 3 are presented. Each section is accompanied by a short discussion summarizing the results and providing any relevant points that need highlighting. A final overall view ends the chapter. A fuller discussion of the results and their implications is provided in chapter 5. Table 4.1 summarizes the structure of this chapter.

Table 4.1. Structure of Chapter 4

<b>Chapter 4</b> <b>Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Study 1: Findings<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Findings</li><li>• Summary of the Results and short Discussion</li></ul></li><li>• Study 2: Findings<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Findings</li><li>• Summary of the Results and short Discussion</li></ul></li><li>• Study 3: Findings<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Findings</li><li>• Summary of the Results and short Discussion</li></ul></li><li>• Summary of the Chapter</li></ul>
-------------------------------------	---

4.2. Study 1: Findings

The first empirical study is based on a 2- stage research design and serves two purposes. Study 1a explores the topic of emotions in a call center setting. Study 1b identifies emotions and indicators of emotions specific to the context of one call center. Study 1 therefore leads to the development of the scale measurement of emotions which is quantitatively tested in study 2.

Study 1 answers the following research question across two investigative questions:

**RQ1: What are the emotions experienced by call center customers?**

*IQ1.1: Do customers experience emotions during a call center encounter?*

*IQ1.2: What are the emotions reported by call center customers when recalling a recent encounter?*

Findings of study 1 are analyzed in two different sections. The first study analyses the participants’ opinion of call centers and the importance of emotions in a call center context (study 1a). The other presents results regarding the emotions that are identified in such a context (study 1b). Subsequently, a summary of the results is provided.

#### **4.2.1. Study 1a: Findings**

The aim of study 1a was to explore whether emotions were thought to form part of the customer experience in a call center encounter, in order to ascertain that the study of emotions was a researchable topic in this context. In addition, participants were invited to provide their impressions of the context of those emotions with the aim of providing the researcher with some insights into how and when these emotions might occur. These preliminary focus groups asked participants to briefly describe a recent encounter, and a general discussion of customer call center encounters then followed. In total, six themes were identified, three main contextual elements and three emotions.

##### **4.2.1.1. The contextual elements of emotions**

The contextual elements deal with a) the issue of waiting, b) the CCRs' job characteristics and c) the interaction with the CCRs. When participants were asked to describe their recent experience with a call center, the wait was the first aspect which came into their mind. Participants have a poor image of CCRs' job characteristics, perceiving the job to be low skilled, underpaid and consisting of routine tasks. Participants also shared their opinions on their interactions with the CCR. They indicate interaction problems which are: a lack of personalization, empathy and understanding as well as poor skills and language issues since call centers are often located abroad and outsourced. Table 4.2 illustrates these findings.



Table 4.2. Study 1a. Contextual Elements of Emotions– Terms and Verbatim extracts

Terms used to describe wait	Summary of the context and Verbatim extracts
<b>Wait length</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You always have to wait</li><li>• Waiting time come to mind first</li><li>• I know I'll have to wait</li><li>• It takes a long time before reaching a CCR</li></ul>	<p>Participants explain that waiting time is a key characteristic of a call center. Some of them do things so that it goes faster.</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><b>1. Focus group 1:</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 2:</u> <i>'I know I will have to wait. This is a typical characteristic of call centers. Ask anybody. You always have to wait'.</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 1:</u> <i>'That is so true. What comes directly to my mind when I hear "call center" is "wait". We have to wait'</i></p> <p><b>2. Focus group 2:</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 6:</u> <i>'I can not stand waiting. Do you know what I do? I put the speaker on and I clean my house. That way feel like I'm not wasting time'.</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 7:</u> <i>'It's true that it's the first thing you think about when you talk about call centers. I'm sure that if you ask anybody, people will answer "wait"'</i>.</p>

Table 4.2. Study 1a. Contextual Elements of Emotions—Terms and Verbatim extracts

CCRs' job characteristics	Terms used to describe CCRs' job characteristics	Summary of the context and Verbatim extracts
<p>CCRs' job characteristics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor working conditions</li> <li>• Low-paid job</li> <li>• Routine tasks</li> </ul>	<p>What comes to participants' minds when thinking about a call center is the CCRs' job characteristics particularly the CCRs' working conditions, skills, salary or language.</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><b>Focus group 1:</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 1:</u> <i>'We have to repeat everything and they follow a script'</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 3:</u> <i>'They follow a script and have a list of things to do. This job doesn't demand any skills. They do routine tasks'</i></p> <p><b>Focus group 2:</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 7:</u> <i>'Their working conditions must be poor. Being in front of a computer, calling people and trying to find a solution. They probably get insulted by people.'</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 2:</u> <i>'One of my friends works in a call center. She is underpaid, she only has two breaks a day and when she wants to go to the bathroom, she has to ask her boss. Isn't it weird?'</i></p>

Table 4.2. Study 1a. Contextual Elements of Emotions—Terms and Verbatim extracts

Interactions with CCRs	Terms used to describe interactions with CCRs	Summary of the context and Verbatim extracts
		<p>The interactions with the CCR are another theme that emerged from the focus groups. These are difficult mainly because of a lack of personalization, empathy and understanding due to a lack of skills or language issues</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><b>Focus group 1:</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 1:</u> <i>'Interactions with CCRs are horrible. Since they follow a script, you have to repeat all your personal details, background information. This is complete nonsense. There is no personal interaction, no real relationship with the CCR'.</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 3:</u> <i>'The worst is the language problem. Either it is too technical or they don't speak French very well. I don't know one call center in which the CCRs speak correctly or understandably. You do not feel unique. There is a lack of personalisation'</i></p> <p><b>Focus group 2:</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 2:</u> <i>'We can't create any relationship. they don't care about us. I was just another customer with a problem.'</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 4:</u> <i>'But there is also a lack of understanding which might affect the interaction. When the CCR uses technical language, I get so confused.'</i></p>
Interactions with CCRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unskilled employee</li><li>• Language issues</li><li>• Lack of personalization</li><li>• Lack of empathy</li><li>• Lack of understanding</li></ul>	



#### **4.2.1.2. Emotions in call center encounters**

Study 1a indicates that individuals felt emotions in a call center encounter and therefore this provided preliminary evidence that emotions are an important element in the customer experience in a utilitarian service environment, in that of a disembodied call center setting. Three indicators of emotions were identified in both focus groups together with participants' experience. These are: *relief* conceptualized as a positive emotion and, *frustration* and *powerlessness* conceptualized as indicators of a negative emotional state. A presentation of the emotions, indicators, expressions of emotions, context and verbatim is reported in tables 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.3. Study 1a. Positive Emotions – Terms and Verbatim extracts

Emotions terms used	Summary of the context and Verbatim extracts
<b>Relieved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel relief</li> <li>• I was relieved</li> <li>• What a relief</li> </ul>	<p>Individuals felt relieved for one main reason: a solution to the problem was found whatever the type of interaction with the CCR (e.g. good or bad).</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><b>Focus group 1</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 1:</u> 'I was relieved because the CCR solved my problem. This was the aim'.</p> <p><u>Respondent 2:</u> 'It was exactly the same for me. I made an order on the Internet but one item was missing. And I paid for everything. I was a little bit upset so I called the company. I spent time waiting but when I explained my problem they told me that they had already sent the item. The CCR apologized and I felt relieved. My problem was solved and I received the item the day after"'. </p> <p><b>Focus group 2</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 7:</u>'I had a hard time with this experience. I waited 30 minutes before talking to a CCR She did not speak really good French. So I spent a long time explaining my problem. But finally she found a solution and it worked. I was relieved because a solution was found after only one call. It was difficult but the problem is solved'.</p> <p><u>Respondent 2:</u> 'I totally agree. It was the same for me. The most important thing is to get your problem solved. When I called, the CCR told me that the problem came from the company. I was so relieved'.</p> <p><u>Respondent 5:</u> 'Whatever the experience, when they find a solution, one feels relief somehow'.</p>

Table 4.4. Study 1a. Negative Emotional State – Terms and Verbatim extracts

Emotion terms used	Summary of the context and Verbatim extracts
Frustrated	<p>Frustration was the most cited negative emotions. Participants felt frustration when their goals were not achieved.</p> <p><u>Verbatim:</u></p> <p><b>Focus group 1</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 3:</u> <i>'When I called, the CCR did not meet my expectations. I was so frustrated. I thought it would be solved rapidly'</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 1:</u> <i>'I understand whay you say. You feel frustrated when they do not meet our requirements. '</i></p> <p><b>Focus group 2</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 4:</u> <i>'I felt the same but for different reasons. The CCR did not solve my problem entirely. He was competent for one part of my problem. So I was a little bit frustrated because my problem was not completely solved'.</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 3:</u> <i>'The call center had technical problems. The CCR told me that they could not have access to the customer information so they couldn't do anything. This meant that the call center made me waste my time and money but there was no positive outcome. It was a very frustrating situation'.</i></p>

Table 4.4. Study 1a. Negative Emotional State – Terms and Verbatim extracts

Emotion terms used	Summary of the context and Verbatim extracts
<b>Powerless</b>	<p>The second negative feeling cited was powerlessness. Participants felt powerless when they couldn't change or control anything.</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><b>1. Focus group 1:</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 3:</u> <i>The first time I called the bank, the CCR was not able to meet my requirements. So, I asked : Who can do it?' I couldn't do it on my own, the CCR couldn't either so I felt powerless [...]</i> <i>The call center is often the only way to interact with the company. So I depend on it but when the CCR cannot give me an answer, what can I do? I am bound hand and feet'</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 1:</u> <i>I understand what you are saying. I did not feel powerless last time but it happened to me one day. You do not control the situation since you depend on CCR's understanding and skills.'</i></p> <p><b>2. Focus group 2:</b></p> <p><u>Respondent 3:</u> <i>I feel like I did not control anything. The call center is the only place to find a solution today'.</i></p> <p><u>Respondent 1:</u> <i>Your situation is in the hands of someone else. You have no power.'</i></p>

In summary, study 1a provided preliminary evidence that emotions, in particular frustration, relief and powerlessness formed part of the customer experience in a call center setting. In addition, waiting time, the nature of the CCR's training/ work conditions and the impersonal nature of the interaction with the CCR were contextual elements that were thought important during the call center experience.

After confirming that emotions indeed formed part of the customer experience in general, the next phase, study 1b went deeper into individual experiences in order to generate emotions items for the subsequent quantitative study 2. Study 1b comprised twenty in-depth interviews discussed in the next section.

#### **4.2.2. Study 1b: Findings**

The aim of study 1b is to identify emotions specific to a call center context. Three principal indicators of emotions (relief, powerlessness and frustration) emerged from the analysis of the focus groups in study 1a. Therefore, in study 1b, the author checked whether these indicators are experienced by call center customers or not and tried to generate a fuller set of context-specific indicators of emotions in the words of the respondents in line with the semantic view of emotions (Barrett et al., 2007; Buck and Georgson, 1997; Shaver, 1987). There is evidence for a range of emotions (positive and negative) that are experienced by customers.

Content analysis was used to identify each emotion mentioned based on semantics and other generic expressions.

The first finding is those respondents have encountered more negative experience in a call center. A first round of analysis showed that respondents report more negative emotions (11) than positive emotions (4). However, two positive emotions (proud and surprised) and six negative emotions (upset, humiliated, sad, guilty, disrespectful and disappointed) addressed in the in-depth interviews were not kept because of a low number of references and presence in interviews.

The analysis included therefore five indicators of a negative emotional state and two positive emotions. Results are presented separately focusing on the positive emotions and on the negative emotional state.

#### **4.2.2.1. The positive emotions**

Two key positive emotions were identified in the analysis of data. These include happy and relieved. The first important element is that relief which was identified in study 1a was still present in data collected during in-depth interviews. Findings also showed that relief was cited as much as happiness (15 references vs. 14 references) but there were more respondents who expressed relief compared with happiness (13 interviews vs. 6 interviews).

#### **4.2.2.2. The negative emotions**

Five indicators of a negative emotional state stemmed from the analysis of data. These are frustration, anger, powerlessness, discouragement and stress. Frustration and powerlessness identified in study 1a were also addressed in study 1b. However, in study 1b, the most indicators cited was anger with 38 references addressed in 15 interviews. The number of respondents mentioning frustration was similar (15 interviews) but respondents referred to frustration in a lesser way (26 references). Expressions or terms related to stress and discouragement were cited with 14 terms in 10 interviews. At last, 8 respondents expressed powerlessness across 10 references.

Tables 4.5 and 4.6 provide for each emotion and indicator the terms used to describe emotions, the summary of the context and the verbatim extracts to clarify how categorization took place.



Table 4.5. Study 1b. Positive Emotions –Terms and Verbatim extracts

Emotion terms	Summary and Verbatim extracts
<p><b>Happy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was happy</li> <li>• I was delighted</li> <li>• I felt joy</li> <li>• I was in heaven</li> </ul>	<p>Participants felt happy for two reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The CCR was empathic and clearly understood the situation and found a solution</li> <li>•The CCR did not solve the problem but did his/her best to guide the respondent to the right person</li> </ul> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><i>'I was so happy. Once I finally reached the CCR, I explained my problem and the CCR was very empathetic. He gave me clear instructions but I did not initially understand what he was telling me. So, he took his time, detailed the process I had to follow and I managed to activate my Internet line. So, he found the solution and we had a pleasant time'. (In-depth interview 4)</i></p> <p><i>'It's funny because my problem was not solved at this time. But the CCR was very polite and empathetic. She was not able to solve my problem but she was caring and she gave me all the information in order to get my problem fixed. So she transferred my call but I knew how to explain my problem and finally it was solved. So I was happy'. (In-depth interview 9)</i></p>

Table 4.5. Study 1b. Positive Emotions –Terms and Verbatim extracts

Emotion terms	Summary and Verbatim extracts
<b>Relieved</b>	<p>Individuals felt relieved for one main reason: a solution to the problem was found whatever the type of interaction with the CCR (e.g. good or bad).</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><i>'I was so relieved. My problem was solved. I did not understand the amount on my bill and you know, this is money. So I was a little bit tense but once I was told the reason why I had to pay this amount, I felt relieved. As I said to my wife 'A good thing done'. (In-depth interview 16)</i></p> <p><i>'The interaction with the CCR was so bad. She did not understand my problem, she did not speak French. I had to repeat things at least three times. But, you know what? In the end, I felt relieved because she finally found a solution. This is all I wanted. So I felt relieved'. (In-depth interview 3)</i></p>



Table 4.6. Study 1b. Negative Emotional State –Terms and Verbatim extracts

	Emotion terms	Summary and Verbatim extracts
<b>Frustrated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I was frustrated</li><li>• It is a very frustrating situation</li><li>• I felt frustration</li></ul>	<p>Frustration occurs when individuals cannot reach their objectives. For instance before calling they wanted their problem to be solved but at the end of the interaction, no solution was found. Their goals were blocked.</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><i>'I was frustrated because I had a need that was very clear, I called the service that is supposed to provide an answer to my problem and I didn't get an answer. I followed the whole process, I played the game humming, waiting, listening to the music but in the end, the CCR was not the right person and I was wasting my time. The CCR did not understand my request, he was incompetent and I wanted to hang up. Before calling, I thought 'good, I'm going to find the solution' and in the end, when I hung up, I was frustrated, they couldn't fulfil my request'. (In-depth interview 1)</i></p> <p><i>'Well, you respect the process, you follow the rules, but there's no way, it does not happen. It was a very frustrating situation'. (In-depth interview 2)</i></p>

Table 4.6. Study 1b. Negative Emotional State –Terms and Verbatim extracts

Emotion terms	Summary and Verbatim extracts
<p><b>Angry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It annoys me</li><li>• It puts me off</li><li>• I was very angry</li><li>• It was mad at him</li><li>• I was irritated</li><li>• I fulminated</li></ul>	<p>Participants felt anger because they considered the situation to be unfair and unpleasant.</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p>'It was last week, my Internet connection was not working. It was a very negative experience. I called the company and there it was terrible because when we call, we know we will wait, we will have music, and it annoys me [...] It puts me off, you always have to wait, listening to music and I didn't solve my problem. This is unfair. I was crazy with anger'. (In-depth interview 8)</p> <p>'I fulminated. I had this problem with my bill. Then, I had to wait and finally the CCR was unable to meet my requirements. End of the story. What can I do except be angry?'. (In-depth interview 12)</p>

Table 4.6. Study 1b. Negative Emotional State –Terms and Verbatim extracts

Emotion terms		Summary and Verbatim extracts
Powerless		Participants felt powerless because they couldn't change or control anything.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I was powerless</li><li>• I was helpless</li><li>• I felt powerless</li><li>• I mastered nothing</li><li>• I did not control anything</li><li>• My situation was in the hands of someone else</li><li>• I was bound hand and foot</li></ul>	<p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><i>'I was helpless. I had no control over the situation. I had a problem, I called the number and nothing... I finally reached someone but it was useless and there was no alternative'. (In-depth interview 6)</i></p> <p><i>'I feel like I didn't control anything. The call center is the only place to find a solution. The problem is that I was bound hand and foot'. (In-depth interview 13)</i></p> <p><i>'My situation was in the hands of someone else and I mastered nothing. My Internet connection did not work and I had to wait one week before getting my line activated. I felt powerless'. (In-depth interview 8)</i></p>

Table 4.6. Study 1b. Negative Emotional State –Terms and Verbatim extracts

	Emotion terms	Summary and Verbatim extracts
<p><b>Discouraged</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was discouraged</li> <li>• I wanted to give up</li> <li>• I had a feeling of weariness</li> <li>• It is discouraging</li> </ul>	<p>Participants felt discouraged because they took time reaching someone but it is useless. The CCR is incompetent, he/she does not understand the request or is unable to find the solution.</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><i>'This is so long. It's like preparing a long trip. I did everything. I called, spent time waiting, listening to music, I spent time talking with someone, I repeated information so many times and after all these steps, the CCR told me that he was not able to provide me a clear answer. It is discouraging'. (In-depth interview 18)</i></p> <p><i>'I just wanted to give up. The CCR and I could not discuss anything. He didn't speak good French and I was not able to do what he was telling me. I am so bad with high tech. I was so discouraged' . (In-depth interview 17)</i></p>



Table 4.6. Study 1b. Negative Emotional State –Terms and Verbatim extracts

Emotion terms	Summary and Verbatim extracts
<p><b>Stressed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was stressed</li> <li>• This is a very stressful situation</li> <li>• I was tense</li> </ul>	<p>Participants felt stressed because of the situation itself. Participants know in advance it will be stressful based on their previous experience. First, they have a problem which usually lead to stress (need for information, need to activate their Internet line). Then, they spend time on the phone with no face-to-face interaction. They fear a lack of understanding or feel like they will be unable to clearly explain their problem. At the end, the situation can still be stressful since their problem is not solved and they waste their time.</p> <p><u>Verbatim extracts:</u></p> <p><i>'It was a complete waste of time. I was tense from the beginning until the end. I called because I had no Internet connection and I was still stressed at the end of the call. The CCR did not master French so we had difficulty communicating and it increased my level of stress. There was no way'. (In-depth interview 15)</i></p> <p><i>'I was tense because I had no face-to-face interaction. The CCR is the only person who can solve the problem and he did not understand anything. I could not explain anything to him. It was panic'. (In-depth interview 20)</i></p>

Table 4.7 shows the process that was used to identify positive emotions and negative emotional state from the first-order concepts to the aggregate (theoretical) dimensions.

*Table 4.7. Study 1b. Coding Structure*

Aggregate Dimensions	2nd Order Themes	1st Order Concepts
Positive Emotions	Happy	I was happy I was delighted
	Relieved	I was relieved What a relief
Negative Emotional State	Frustrated	I was frustrated It is a very frustrating situation
	Angry	I was angry It put me off
	Powerless	I felt powerless I did not control anything
	Discouraged	I was discouraged I wanted to give up
	Stressed	I was stressed This is a very stressful situation

The results of study 1b therefore support the preliminary finding from study 1a that customer emotions play a role in call center encounters. The major outcome however is the identification by the participants themselves of a set of emotions suitable for use in a scale for measuring French customers' emotions during a call center encounter.

#### **4.2.3. Study 1: Summary of the results**

Study 1 was an exploratory research investigating the topic of emotions in a call center setting. Study 1 was driven by a research question and two investigative questions:

**RQ1: What are the emotions experienced by call center customers?**

*IQ1.1: Do customers experience emotions during a call center encounter?*

*IQ1.2: What are the emotions reported by call center customers when recalling a recent encounter?*

The main findings show that the study of emotions in a call center setting is worthy of research because participants widely reported feeling emotions and indicators of emotions in this context. After completing the analysis of study 1a and study 1b, seven main indicators of emotions emerged as predominant, and were selected for use in the subsequent quantitative study 2. Those are positive emotions (e.g. happy and relieved) and indicators of a negative emotional state (frustrated, angry, powerless, discouraged and stressed).

Study 1 therefore leads to the development of the items for use in a measurement scale of emotions which is quantitatively tested and used in study 2.

#### **4.3. Study 2: Findings**

The second empirical study tests seven research hypotheses through a quantitative research design. Study 2 answers the following overall research question divided into two subsidiary research questions using five investigating questions:

**RQ2: What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a call center encounter?**

**RQ2.1: What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction in a call center encounter?**

*IQ2.1.1: What is the effect of positive customer emotions on satisfaction?*



*IQ2.1.2: What is the effect of negative customer emotions on satisfaction?*

**RQ2.2: What is the effect of emotions and satisfaction on loyalty in a call center encounter?**

*IQ2.2.1: What is the effect of positive customer emotions on loyalty?*

*IQ2.2.2: What is the effect of negative customer emotions on loyalty?*

*IQ2.2.3: What is the effect of satisfaction on loyalty?*

Seven hypotheses stemmed from the literature review as illustrated in table 4.8.

**Table 4.8. Study 2. Research Hypotheses**

<b>H1</b>	Positive emotions have a positive effect on satisfaction
<b>H2</b>	Negative emotions have a negative effect on satisfaction
<b>H3</b>	Positive emotions have a greater effect on satisfaction than negative emotions
<b>H4</b>	Positive emotions have a positive effect on loyalty
<b>H5</b>	Negative emotions have a negative effect on loyalty
<b>H6</b>	Negative emotions have a greater effect on loyalty than positive emotions
<b>H7</b>	Satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty

This section presents the findings of the study 2a (pilot test) and study 2b (main quantitative study).

The main purpose of study 2a was to ensure scale reliability and construct validity. Therefore **Exploratory Factor Analysis** (EFA) was carried out on the emotions and loyalty scales to check the underlying structure of these constructs and to test which items needed to be retained or discarded in the full study. **Confirmatory Factor Analysis** (CFA) was also undertaken in order to verify the suggestion in the literature that the emotions

construct consists of both positive and negative valence dimensions. SPSS version 21.0 was used.

The aim of study 2b was to collect and analyse data from a large sample of the target population, customers of a call center in order to test hypotheses 1-7 arrived at through the literature review. Data analysis employed the two-step approach recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The measurement model was estimated prior to the analysis of the structural model. AMOS version 21.0 was used to check the normality of data, to complete the CFA and to test the significance of the loadings obtained both for the measurement model and structural model (Hair et al., 2010).

#### **4.3.1. Study 2a: Findings of the quantitative pilot test**

##### **4.3.1.1. Study 2a: Sample statistics**

125 respondents completed the questionnaire after 4 days. The speed of response was much higher than average e-mail response speed, which usually ranges from 5 to 10 days (Bachmann et al., 1996; Kiesler and Sproull, 1986; Schaefer and Dillman, 1998; Weible and Wallace, 1998). The response rate (62.5%) is also much higher than average email survey response rates which is around 30% (Sheehan, 2001). Both these results can be explained by the relative ease with which respondents could be contacted and encouraged to fill in the questionnaire.

Of the 125 participants, 85 (68%) had recently initiated a contact with a French telecom provider, which is the sector from which data were collected in the main quantitative study. Most of the respondents initiated the call because of a service failure (42.4%) which could be explained by the fact that the majority of respondents (68%) had had a recent experience with their telecom provider. The gender ratio in the sample was 37.6% male to 62.4% female. Respondents aged from 45 to 54 years old account for 26.4% of the sample followed by respondents aged between 35 and 44 years old (24.8%). The least represented age group was people aged of 65 or over (0.8%). The results also show that most of the

respondents have a high level of educational background since 50.4% of the respondents have a Bac+3/Bac+5 level. This can be explained by the fact that the sample was based on convenience sampling using personal and institutional networks. Finally, in order to contact the company the most popular alternative to phoning the call center was through e-mail (42.4%), followed by chat (20.8%), the Internet website (14.4%), postal letter (14.4%) and finally the store (8%).

#### 4.3.1.2. Study 2a: Construct validity

Three tests were run on the data collected from the pilot test using SPSS version 21.0.

**Exploratory Factor Analysis** (EFA) was carried out on the emotions and loyalty scales to check the underlying structure of these constructs and to test which items needed to be retained or discarded in the full study. **Confirmatory Factor Analysis** (CFA) was also undertaken in order to verify the suggestion in the literature that the emotions construct consists of both positive and negative valence dimensions. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Tests were used to measure the sampling adequacy and to test the overall significance of all correlations within a correlation matrix. In this thesis, KMO scores are above the recommended 0.5 and Bartlett scores are high with a significance level below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2010; Malhotra, 2007). Results are summarized in table 4.9.

*Table 4.9. Study 2a. KMO and Bartlett Tests for Emotions and Loyalty*

		Emotions	Loyalty
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin</b>		.870	.826
<b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	Approx. Chi-Square	455.123	582.982
	df	21	10
	Sig.	.000	.000

**The construct validity** shows the extent to which the measures of loyalty and emotions correctly represent the constructs and the degree to which they are free from systematic or nonrandom error (Hair et al., 2010). Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was used and the rotation converged in 3 iterations. Loadings were all high, above 0.5 which is an

indication that the items represented the dimension appropriately. The emotions items loaded onto 2 components: a positive emotions dimension and a negative emotional state dimension. This is consistent with the view that the valence dimension is a core component of emotion (e.g. Cacioppo and Berntson, 1999; Lazarus, 1991). The factor loadings and the amount of variance for emotions are displayed in tables 4.10 and 4.11 respectively.

**Table 4.10. Study 2a. Factor Loadings for Emotions**

Indicators	Negative emotional state	Positive emotions
Happy		0.864
Relieved		0.885
Frustrated	0.734	
Angry	0.691	
Powerless	0.758	
Discouraged	0.798	
Stressed	0.869	

The negative emotional state factors account for 59.925 % of the variance and the positive emotions for 12.972%, the combined variance being 72.897% well above the 60% considered as a satisfactory solution (Hair, 2010).

**Table 4.11. Study 2a. Amount of Variance for Emotions**

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Varimax rotation		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.195	59.925	59.925	4.195	59.925	59.925	3.128	44.679	44.679
2	.908	12.972	72.897	0.908	12.972	72.897	1.975	28.217	72.897
3	.581	8.302	81.199						
4	.470	6.721	87.919						
5	.309	4.419	92.338						
6	.278	3.971	96.309						
7	.258	3.691	100.000						

The same procedure was followed to assess the validity for the loyalty construct. The five factors for the loyalty construct load well above 0.5 on to one dimension, accounting for



79.049% of the variance. Tables 4.12 and 4.13 report the factor loadings and amount of variance for the loyalty construct.

**Table 4.12. Study 2a. Factor Loadings for Loyalty**

	Loyalty
I am likely to say positive things about this company to other people	0.868
I would recommend this company to someone who seeks my advice	0.922
I would encourage friends and relatives to do business with this company	0.908
I consider this company my first choice to buy the appropriate services	0.891
I am likely to do more business with the company in the next few years	0.855

**Table 4.13. Study 2a. Amount of Variance for Loyalty**

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.952	79.049	79.049	3.952	79.049	79.049
2	.565	11.293	90.343			
3	.225	4.507	94.850			
4	.142	2.847	97.697			
5	.115	2.303	100.000			

The findings therefore show that the emotions construct is two-dimensional with positive emotions and a negative emotional state comprising those dimensions, as suggested in the literature (Izard, 1977). The scales were next tested for inter-item reliability.

**4.3.1.3. Study 2a: Scale reliability**

The internal reliability of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach alpha. Even though there is no standard concerning the alpha level and its reliable consistency, most scholars agree to say that an alpha value between 0.70 and 0.95 is acceptable (Hair et al., 2010; Nunnally, 1978; Nunally and Bernstein, 1994; Peterson, 1994). Positive emotions and negative emotional state were treated as separate constructs, and so scale reliabilities are

reported for negative emotional state ( $\alpha = 0.878$ ) and loyalty ( $\alpha = 0.933$ ), but since the positive measure contains only two items, Cronbach alpha is not a suitable test since it tests each item against the cumulative correlations of the other items. Inter-item correlation was used, and a high and significant Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.688$  (sig. 0.000) was found.

#### 4.3.1.4. Study 2a: Normality testing

According to Roussel et al. (2002), to be considered as a normal distribution, the skewness of the shape must be below |3| and the kurtosis must be below |8| or Kline (2010) suggests that skewness and kurtosis must be below |3|. All variables used in this study displayed normal distributions and so this indicated that the scales were measuring the variables under study appropriately to ensure appropriate amounts of variability in the responses, and that the data in the full scale study would have normal distributions and be usable in an SEM modeling exercise. Table 4.14 summarizes these results.

**Table 4.14. Study 2a. Normality Testing for the Variables**

						Skewness		Kurtosis	
Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Happy	125	1	5	3.448	1.267	-.027	.217	-1.287	.430
Relieved	125	1	5	3.648	1.284	-.289	.217	-1.328	.430
Frustrated	125	1	5	3.632	1.329	-.614	.217	-.794	.430
Angry	125	1	5	3.808	1.401	-0.867	.217	-0.555	.430
Powerless	125	1	5	3.136	1.483	-0.117	.217	-1.383	.430
Discouraged	125	1	5	3.712	1.384	-0.654	.217	-0.905	.430
Stressed	125	1	5	3.800	1.251	-0.769	.217	-0.400	.430
Satisfaction	125	1	5	2.912	1.143	-0.056	.217	-0.834	.430
Loyalty 1	125	1	5	2.992	1.081	-0.412	.217	-0.481	.430
Loyalty 2	125	1	5	3.064	1.091	-.394	.217	-.463	.430
Loyalty 3	125	1	5	2.952	1.142	-.136	.217	-.690	.430
Loyalty 4	125	1	5	3.000	1.178	-.211	.217	-.786	.430
Loyalty 5	125	1	5	3.248	1.075	-.472	.217	-.257	.430

As a summary, all these results indicate four key piece of information: a) the emotions construct consists of both positive and negative valence dimensions, b) all items have been

retained and show a high level of construct validity with loadings above or close to 0.7. Positive emotions comprise two items (*happy* and *relieved*), negative emotional state include five items (*frustrated, angry, powerless, discouraged and stressed*) and loyalty contains five items (*'I am likely to say positive things about this company to other people'; 'I would recommend this company to someone who seeks my advice'; 'I would encourage friends and relatives to do business with this company'; 'I consider this company my first choice to buy the appropriate services'; 'I am likely to do more business with the company in the next few years'*), c) The internal reliability is also high with Cronbach alphas indicators well above 0.8 for the negative emotional state and loyalty constructs and an inter-item correlation of  $r=0.688$  for the positive emotions construct, d) Finally, all variables used in this study displayed normal distributions.

#### **4.3.2. Study 2b: Findings of the main quantitative study**

##### **4.3.2.1. Study 2b: Sample statistics**

The majority of the respondents initiated a call for technical assistance (48.6%) followed by a call for a line activation (26.9%), then ask for information (10.2%), claims (7.7%) and finally account management (6.6%). Males represent 65% and females account for 35% of the participants. In line with the pilot test, people aged from 25 to 34 comprise 38.8% of the sample followed by respondents aged between 35 and 44 years old (26.7%). Only 2.6% are older than 65 which can be explained by the fact that French individuals aged 60 or over are equipped with Internet (41.8%) less than individuals aged between 25 and 39 and 40 and 59 years old (respectively 89.5% and 82.1% possess an Internet connection)<sup>2</sup>. The results also show that most of the respondents have a high level of education since 50.4% of the respondents have a French higher education degree level (Bac+3/Bac+5). This is

---

<sup>2</sup>Source : Insee, SRCV-SILC (2011), Retrieved 11/03/2013, 2013 from [http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg\\_id=0&ref\\_id=NATnon05156](http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=0&ref_id=NATnon05156)



reflected in the figures for professional background, 30.3% of the respondents are employees and 25.8 % are managers or executive level.

A binomial test for gender was performed in order to verify the sample adequacy. Table 4.15 indicates that there is a significant over-representation of male respondents. The company was not able to provide the figures for gender ratios of their clients but French statistics indicate that men are more likely to have an Internet connection (70.6%) than women (59.5%)<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, it could be suggested that there are more men contacting a call center in telecommunication than women as they are more likely to have technological problems to solve.

**Table 4.15. Study 2b. Binomial Test for Gender**

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender	Group 1	Male	936	0,65	0,5	0,000
	Group 2	Female	504	0,35		
	Total		1440	1		

Table 4.16 shows the number of calls per issue.

**Table 4.16. Study 2b. Chi-square Test for Calling Issues**

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Technical assistance	700	288	412
Line activation	387	288	99
Account Management	95	288	-193
Claims	111	288	-177
Ask for information	147	288	-141
Total	1440		

The number of calls per calling issue was not provided by the company due to confidentiality considerations, and it can simply be noted that the highest number of calls

---

<sup>3</sup> Source INSEE, Retrieved 11/03/2013, 2013 from [http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?ref\\_id=ip1340](http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?ref_id=ip1340)

concerned technical assistance and line activation, both of which have the potential of causing emotional reactions (compared to simple information seeking) since if customers do not have access to internet or telephone services their work and everyday activities can be seriously impacted.

#### **4.3.2.2. Study 2b: Model testing, model fit and estimation methods**

The aim of SEM is to test whether the model fits the data well enough to make it an 'acceptable' model i.e. that the relationships between variables are not due to error, and differ significantly from the null hypothesis that there are no relationships between variables. The model fit is a prerequisite to analyzing the results and therefore supporting or not the hypotheses.

The data analysis used the two-stage approach recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The measurement model was estimated prior to the analysis of the structural model. CFA, using AMOS 21.0, was undertaken in order to verify uni-dimensionality and convergent validity of the twelve items used to measure three latent constructs. The Maximum Likelihood Estimation method was used due to its robustness to violation of normality (Chou and Bentler, 1995).

#### ***Measurement model***

As illustrated in table 4.17, the latent constructs in the model perform well. Average Variances Extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.685 to 0.870, greater than the recommended 0.5 level (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The Composite Reliabilities (CRs) ranged between 0.908 and 0.971, above the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010). Cronbach alphas are well above 0.8 (Nunally and Bernstein, 1994). Positive emotions and negative emotional state were treated as separate constructs, and so scale reliabilities are reported for negative emotional state ( $\alpha = 0.932$ ) and loyalty ( $\alpha = 0.971$ ), but since the positive measure contains only two items, Cronbach alpha is not a suitable test since it tests each item against the cumulative correlations of the other items. Inter-

item correlation was used, and a high and significant Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.828$  (sig. 0.000) was found. Finally, the loadings of each item (all above 0.8, see Hair et al., 2010) confirm that the scale developed to measure positive emotions and negative emotional state and the scale used to measure loyalty are satisfactory.

**Table 4.17. Study 2b. Construct Evaluation**

Construct	Standardized loading	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
<i>Positive emotions</i>				0.828*	0.908	0.832
Happy	0.959	2.417	1.277			
Relieved	0.863	2.356	1.329			
<i>Negative emotional state</i>				0.932	0.933	0.685
Frustrated	0.803	2.942	1.570			
Angry	0.891	2.801	1.603			
Powerless	0.853	3.291	1.621			
Discouraged	0.914	2.992	1.616			
Stressed	0.820	2.687	1.555			
<i>Loyalty</i>				0.971	0.971	0.87
I am likely to say positive things about this company to other people	0.907	3.367	1.334			
I would recommend this company to someone who seeks my advice	0.973	3.359	1.337			
I would encourage friends and relatives to do business with this company	0.972	3.293	1.339			
I consider this company my first choice to buy the appropriate services	0.910	3.141	1.317			
I am likely to do more business with the company in the next few years	0.898	3.297	1.279			

\* Cronbach alpha is not a suitable test since it tests each item against the cumulative correlations of the other items. Inter-item correlation was therefore used based on the Pearson's correlation coefficient

The correlation between latent constructs shows a good level of discriminant validity of the constructs. The inter-construct squared correlation (i.e. share variance) estimates are presented in the lower triangle of the matrix. The AVE is shown in the diagonal (in blue). The inter-construct correlation estimates between the measured constructs are shown in the

upper triangle of the matrix. Since all AVEs are greater than the corresponding inter-construct squared correlation estimates, the discriminant validity for all construct pairs is confirmed (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). A summary of results for the testing of constructs is provided in table 4.18.

**Table 4.18. Study 2b. Justifications for Discriminant Validity**

	Positive emotions	Negative emotional state	Loyalty
Positive emotions	0.832	-0.720	0.563
Negative emotions	0.518	0.64	-0.598
Loyalty	0.317	0.358	0.87

### Method of estimation

Since SEM is used to test hypotheses based on the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) method, it is essential to check for normal distribution of the variables. The skewness and kurtosis of the distributions are below |3| (Kline, 2010) and so the MLE method can be used in order to analyze the data collected. Table 4.19 reports the normality testing for positive emotions, negative emotional state and loyalty constructs.

**Table 4.19. Study 2b. Normality Testing for the Variables**

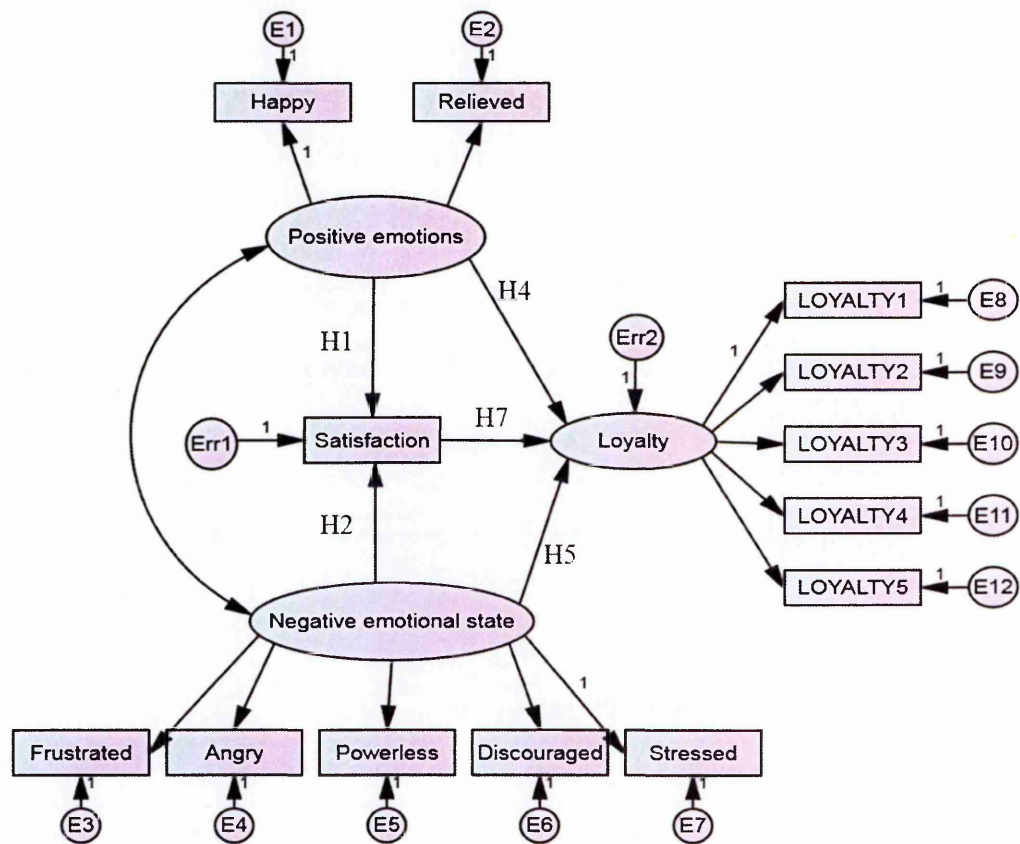
Variables	N	Min	Max	Skewness	c.r.	Kurtosis	c.r.
Happy	1440	1	5	0.29	4.486	-1.202	-9.313
Relieved	1440	1	5	0.449	6.957	-1.111	-8.602
Frustrated	1440	1	5	0.038	0.592	-1.53	-11.848
Angry	1440	1	5	0.186	2.88	-1.526	-11.82
Powerless	1440	1	5	-0.33	-5.115	-1.492	-11.558
Discouraged	1440	1	5	-0.023	-0.357	-1.579	-12.227
Stressed	1440	1	5	0.284	4.401	-1.42	-10.997
Satisfaction	1440	1	5	0.147	2.284	-1.346	-10.43
Loyalty 1	1440	1	5	-0.466	-7.216	-0.859	-6.655
Loyalty 2	1440	1	5	-0.439	-6.804	-0.905	-7.01
Loyalty 3	1440	1	5	-0.359	-5.564	-0.974	-7.541
Loyalty 4	1440	1	5	-0.193	-2.992	-1.014	-7.851
Loyalty 5	1440	1	5	-0.391	-6.057	-0.785	-6.078



*Measurement model*

Figure 4.1. introduces the measurement model and relationships between variables illustrated by the hypotheses.

*Figure 4.1. Study 2b. Measurement Model and Relationships between Variables*



As a reminder, Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 6 involve the relative effect of positive emotions and negative emotions on satisfaction (Hypothesis 3) and on loyalty (Hypothesis 6). These relationships are not indicated in figure 4.1.

*Model fit*

Model fit was tested using Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) for model fit, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) for model comparison (Byrne, 2001; Hair et al., 2010; Schumacker and Lomax, 2004; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007; Tanaka, 1993).

In this case, the chi-square goodness of fit index was not significant ( $\text{CMIN}/df = 7.841 > 5$ ;  $\chi^2 = 478.317$ ,  $df = 61$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). The chi-square statistics is known to reject valid models in large samples (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Since Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) are based on  $\chi^2$ , which is unsuitable for large sample sizes as used in this study, these indices have not been assessed (Fan et al., 1999; Marsh et al., 1988). The author relied therefore on the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). All of these indices met or exceeded the critical values (CFI=0.981, TLI=0.976, RMSEA=0.069) for good model fit (Byrne, 2001; Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2010; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). A model fit summary with other fit statistics such as GFI and AGFI, which also met the critical values, can be found in Appendix 11.

The model was therefore considered as a relevant basis for testing the hypothesized relationships.

#### **4.3.2.3. Study 2b: Hypothesis testing**

In this study, all relationships were found significant at  $p=0.00$  except for the relationship between positive emotions and loyalty that is significant at  $p=0.02$ . This means that all hypotheses 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 were supported. Unstandardized regression coefficients and p-values are illustrated in table 4.20. In order to test hypotheses 3 and 6, a comparison of standardized regression coefficients was effected.

**Table 4.20. Study 2b. Unstandardized Regression Weights and p-values**

Hypothesis	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Supported
H1	Positive emotions	Satisfaction	0.740	0.032	22.804	***	Yes
H2	Negative emotional state	Satisfaction	-0.314	0.028	-11.071	***	Yes
H4	Positive emotions	Loyalty	0.115	0.049	6.647	0,02**	Yes
H5	Negative emotional state	Loyalty	-0.312	0.036	-8.608	***	Yes
H7	Satisfaction	Loyalty	0.257	0.039	2.331	***	Yes

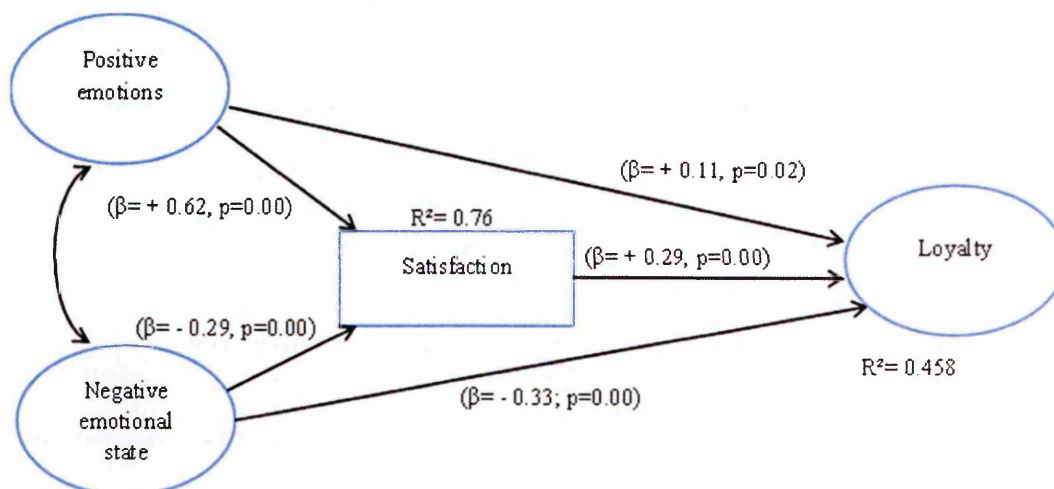
*Squarred multiple correlations*

Satisfaction	0.760
Loyalty	0.458

\*\* p<0,05, \*\*\*p<0,01 (two-tailed test)

Figure 4.2 presents a summary of the path model with the standardized regression coefficients and the square multiple correlation coefficients for the two endogenous constructs in the model (satisfaction and loyalty). Findings indicate that both positive emotions and negative emotional state have an impact on satisfaction explaining 76% of the variance of this construct. Positive emotions, negative emotional state and satisfaction have an impact on loyalty explaining 45,8% of the variance of this construct.

**Figure 4.2. Study 2b. Summary of the Path Model**



The literature review showed that negative emotions can have various consequences on consumer attitudes and behavior such as NWOM, complaint behavior, switching and support seeking (Bougie et al., 2013; Folkes et al., 1987; Gelbrich, 2010; Harrison-Walker, 2012; Jorgensen, 1996; Kalamas et al., 2008; Maute and Dubé, 1999; Wetzer et al., 2007), and that in particular it could be expected that there are effects on satisfaction and loyalty



(del Rio et al., 2009; Dubé and Morgan, 1998; Haj-Salem and Chebat, 2014; Liljander and Strandvik, 1997; Westbrook, 1987). In the particular context of this study however, some previously overlooked phenomena were found. Firstly, negative emotions have a stronger effect on loyalty than positive emotions, meaning that negative emotions decrease loyalty more than positive emotions increase it. The second observation that should be emphasized is that by using measurement indicators of emotions in a call center context evoked by customers themselves, it can be seen that negative emotions have a stronger effect on loyalty than satisfaction does. This provides an interesting contribution to the literature on the satisfaction-loyalty link by showing that loyalty can be more strongly predicted by emotions than by satisfaction, at least in a call center service setting.

The following section involves a presentation of the hypotheses outcomes.

#### **4.3.2.4. Study 2b: Outcomes of hypotheses**

##### **H1: Positive emotions have a positive effect on satisfaction**

The standardized regression coefficient between positive emotions and customers' satisfaction was strong, positive and significant ( $\beta = + 0.62$ ), suggesting a close relationship between these two variables. As a consequence, the hypothesis that individuals who felt positive emotions are satisfied (H1) is supported. The happier and the more relieved, the more satisfied the respondents were.

##### **H2: Negative emotions have a negative effect on satisfaction**

The standardized regression coefficient between negative emotional state and customers' satisfaction was found negative ( $\beta = -0.29$ ). This result confirmed that individuals who felt frustration, anger, discouragement, powerless and stress are less satisfied. H2 is therefore supported.

### **H3: Positive emotions have a greater effect on satisfaction than negative emotions**

The results of this thesis show that positive emotions have a much stronger positive effect ( $\beta = + 0.62$ ) on satisfaction than negative emotional state ( $\beta = - 0.29$ ). Hence, H3 is supported.

### **H4: Positive emotions have a positive effect on loyalty**

The standardized regression coefficient between positive emotions and customers' loyalty was positive ( $\beta = + 0.11$ ). H3 is confirmed at a level of significance  $p = 0.02$ . This result indicates that individuals who felt happy and relieved will remain loyal to the company, recommend the company and do business with it in the future.

### **H5: Negative emotions have a negative effect on loyalty**

The standardized regression coefficient between negative emotional state and customers' loyalty was negative ( $\beta = -0.33$ ). As a consequence, individuals who felt negative emotions regarding their experience with the call center were not loyal to the company and H5 is supported.

### **H6: Negative emotions have a greater effect on loyalty than positive emotions**

The results of this thesis show that negative emotional state decreases loyalty more strongly ( $\beta = - 0.33$ ) than positive emotions increase loyalty ( $\beta = + 0.11$ ). H6 is therefore supported.

### **H7: Satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty**

The correlation between satisfaction and loyalty was positive ( $\beta = + 0.29$ ). Individuals who were satisfied tended to be more loyal to the company. As a consequence, H7 is supported.

A summary of the findings is provided in table 4.21.

**Table 4.21. Study 2b. Summary of the Hypotheses and Findings**

Hypotheses	Findings	
H1: Positive emotions have a positive effect on satisfaction	Supported	$\beta = 0.62$ $p = 0.00$
H2: Negative emotions have a negative effect on satisfaction	Supported	$\beta = -0.29$ $p = 0.00$
H3: Positive emotions have a greater effect on satisfaction than negative emotions	Supported	$\beta = 0.62 > \beta = -0.29$ $p = 0.00$
H4: Positive emotions have a positive effect impact on loyalty	Supported	$\beta = 0.11$ $p = 0.02$
H5: Negative emotions have a negative effect on loyalty	Supported	$\beta = -0.33$ $p = 0.00$
H6: Negative emotions have a greater effect on loyalty than positive emotions	Supported	$\beta = -0.33, p = 0.00$ $\beta = 0.11, p = 0.02$
H7: Satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty	Supported	$\beta = 0.29$ $p = 0.00$

#### 4.3.2.5. Study 2b: Summary of the results

The seven hypotheses are supported, at a significance level of  $p=0.00$  for Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 7 and at  $p=0.02$  for Hypothesis 4. Findings of Hypotheses 1, 2, 4 and 5 show that there is a symmetrical relationship between emotions, satisfaction and loyalty. Positive emotions lead to positive outcomes whereas negative emotional state generates negative outcomes (Babin and Babin, 2001; Machleit and Mantel, 2001).

The findings from the testing of Hypotheses 3 and 6 are:

##### 1. Relative effects of positive emotions and negative emotional state on satisfaction:

Positive emotions affect satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.62$ ) more than negative emotional state ( $\beta = -0.29$ )

2. Relative effects of positive emotions and negative emotional state on loyalty:

Negative emotional state decreases loyalty ( $\beta = -0.33$ ) more strongly than positive emotions increase loyalty ( $\beta = 0.11$ ).

Finally, results from the Hypothesis 7 are consistent with previous research showing that satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Mittal and Kamakura 2001; Oliver, 1997; Picon et al., 2014; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

#### 4.3.3. Study 2: Summary of the results

Study 2 was driven by one general research question, two subsidiary questions and five investigative questions as follows:

**RQ2: What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a call center encounter?**

**RQ2.1: What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction in a call center encounter?**

*IQ2.1.1: What is the effect of positive customer emotions on satisfaction?*

*IQ2.1.2: What is the effect of negative customer emotions on satisfaction?*

**RQ2.2: What is the effect of emotions and satisfaction on loyalty in a call center encounter?**

*IQ2.2.1: What is the effect of positive customer emotions on loyalty?*

*IQ2.2.2: What is the effect of negative customer emotions on loyalty?*

*IQ2.2.3: What is the effect of satisfaction on loyalty?*

Results from study 2 showed that positive emotions have a positive effect on satisfaction and that negative emotions have a negative effect on satisfaction. Moreover positive emotions have a greater effect on satisfaction than negative emotions.

Furthermore, it was found that positive emotions have a positive effect on loyalty and negative emotions have a negative effect on loyalty. Negative emotions have a greater effect on loyalty than positive emotions. Finally satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty. An unexpected finding was that negative emotions have a stronger effect on loyalty than satisfaction does.

#### **4.4. Study 3: Findings**

Study 3 was carried out in order to gather supplementary qualitative data to provide a more in-depth understanding of the role of emotions, in particular frustration in a call center encounter. The aim of study 3 was to study the emotional process through identifying the emotions before and during a negative experience with a call center along with their cognitive appraisal elements of goals, uncertainty, control and responsibility. Furthermore, the outcomes arising from the emotional experience were also investigated.

Study 3 answers the following research question divided into three investigative questions:

#### **RQ3: What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter?**

*IQ3.1: What are the factors that give rise to emotions before calling a call center?*

*IQ3.2: What are the elements during a call center encounter that underpin the emotion of frustration?*

*IQ3.3: What are the elements that trigger adaptive or maladaptive responses to frustration after a call center encounter?*

The results are presented in three sections. The first two sections discuss caller emotions with the accompanying cognitive appraisal elements before and during the call. The third section looks at the adaptive and maladaptive responses to the emotional process at the end

of the call. Figure 4.3 reports a diagram summarizing the frustration process at the end of this section.

#### **4.4.1. Before the call**

##### **4.4.1.1. Negative emotional states**

The first question addressed in the analysis was how participants felt before calling. This step identified the emotional starting state along with the reasons for that state so that the change in emotions during the call could be assessed along with the elements that triggered that change. The analysis showed that most participants in the study reported feeling various negative emotions before starting the call. These included sadness, anxiety, frustration and anger, but also some reported not feeling anything in particular, or that they felt happy or serene.

##### **4.4.1.2. Frustration occurs for those whose goals are blocked**

Appraisal theory suggests that goal blocking is one of the major factors in feeling negative emotions (Scherer, 1984). The cases where initial negative affect was felt at this stage were compared with whether the respondents had been prevented from achieving some goal before the call. The analysis showed that frustration was linked to whether a goal was obstructed or not. This was not so for the other negative emotions such as stress, fear or anxiety which were felt sometimes even without goal obstruction. This supports the suggestion in the literature that **goal obstruction is one of the more important elements in the characterization of frustration.**

##### **4.4.1.3. Negative emotions are experienced when goals are important**

The importance of the goal can be assessed by the possible consequences to the individual of that goal being blocked. Scherer (1984) suggested that emotions can be stronger if a goal blocked is considered to be high in significance to the person. Goal importance was therefore rated according to whether the prevention of the goal was going to have financial or emotional consequences, or even a loss of time (Hui and Tse, 1996) which would mean

that the respondents would have to shift their energy from their usual concerns towards solving a problem that they felt should be easily solved. To illustrate this, one stressed and anxious respondent stated:

*“I called a Danish bank ‘cause I left Denmark, and I needed to change my address and I needed to receive a letter with some codes in order to access my home page, to access my credit card from home.”* (Focus group 29, Respondent 1)

So even though he had not yet started the process of obtaining the letter, and had not been blocked or prevented from carrying out the action, the issue would obviously have important consequences on his daily life, and therefore generated anxiety.

The aim of the calls concerned a variety of problems such as opening and cancelling accounts, seeking information, getting malfunctions repaired, services reinstalled or querying bills. It was also noted that those who reported not feeling any particular emotion before the call tended to be those whose objectives were less important and were calling for reasons such as *searching for information, cancelling a service* or trying to get *additional services*, whereas those whose goals were considered urgent included examples such as *cancelling stolen credit cards, calling for help in urgent situations* such as car breakdown or getting back necessary services such as *internet or telephone connections* that were not working.

Analysis showed that whether the participants had been prevented or not from achieving their goal, **those who had more important or urgent goals also cited more anger, frustration and anxiety.**

#### **4.4.1.4. Uncertainty and initial emotions**

The participants who experience negative emotions expected to have difficulties *obtaining appropriate support* from the call center. Issues included getting through to the right person and having to prove their credentials, as illustrated by the extracts:



*"I imagined it could be difficult because the only testimony is me"* (Focus group 6, Respondent 1).

*"I knew it will generate difficulties since I didn't have the account number, the bill, all client information"* (Focus group 11, Respondent 2).

They were also not sure whether the call center would be able to deal with difficult problems or have the language skills. For example one respondent said:

*"I was worried a bit whether they can understand the language or whether they can understand the problem"* (Focus group 20, Respondent 2).

It has been suggested that anticipatory emotions are important in subsequent attitudes and intentions (Bee and Madrigal, 2013), and the same effect was observed in this analysis. Participants who said they had neutral feelings and/or felt positive emotions at the beginning of the call often thought their problem would be quick, common or easy to solve and believed that the call center would try to help, so uncertainty was low. For example one person said:

*"It was not a big deal because the problem was very clear and I saw the problem being solved very quickly and without any complications"* (Focus group 4, Respondent 1).

From the analysis in this section then, it can be concluded that high **uncertainty is linked to negative emotions** like anxiety, anger and frustration before the call, and **low uncertainty to positive or neutral emotions** such as calmness, happiness, and 'feeling positive'.

#### **4.4.1.5. Emotions, control and responsibility**

The next theme that was identified from the analysis concerned control and responsibility which are thought to be tightly linked to emotions (Ruth et al., 2002; Smith and Ellsworth, 1985; Watson and Spence, 2007). These issues were clearly observed in the participants in this study. Many of the people in the focus groups recalled thinking that as soon as they

started the process of calling, they would be helpless to change the course of the call or to ensure a satisfactory outcome, and that the company or the CCR would be inflexible or unhelpful. These issues had already been raised by participants in study 1a and 1b when they had discussed the context of their encounter and their emotions during a call center experience, and was categorized as an emotion ‘powerlessness’. When appraisal theory is used, however, this concept can be linked to control, a cognitive appraisal linked to emotions (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985), and it was analysed as such in this study (study 3).

The control perceptions that were identified when participants discussed the beginning of the call were not directly linked to a particular encounter, but concerned their general assessments of call centers, based on their own past experience and that of their friends, or ‘common knowledge’ about call centers. In other words they felt some (negative) emotions before they called simply because of the *reputation of call centers*.

Some examples are given in the following exchanges (in focus group 31):

**Respondent 4:** *“We know that the wait will definitely be long, that we will have to speak to 4 different people before getting the right one, we’re going to have to wait 5 minutes, that these waits will be billed etc... So yes, it’s obvious we know beforehand that there will be difficulties”*

**Respondent 2 (Responding):** *“That’s true, we always expect in this kind of situation... we always expect that the response to our question will not necessarily be... that our problem will not be solved at the end of the call.”*

**Respondent 1 (Adding):** *“We’re moved from service to service, we’ve already had a lot... quite often experiences with hotlines and it’s always the same...”*

As well as the general expectation of reduced control, a number of respondents also attributed responsibility to an agent such as the CCR or the company for their lack of control. For example the respondent who said:

*“they told me they would not cut my, the line, and they did so.”* (Focus group 16, Respondent 4)

This person clearly blamed the company for her feelings before the call.

The author can therefore suggest that reduced control and other responsibility are linked to negative emotions.

#### **4.4.1.6. Intermediate summary of the results**

The first investigative question dealt with the factors that give rise to frustration before calling a call center. Findings indicate that even before making the call to the call center, a large majority of the respondents started off with negative emotions. Approximately a third felt no particular emotion and only four of them said they felt good or happy. Negative emotions, and among them, frustration were characterized by high uncertainty, low perceptions of control and seemed to be enhanced when the consequences of not solving the problem were going to have high perceived impacts on their lives in the short term. Frustration was clearly seen when goals had been blocked before the call started. Therefore, the factors that give rise to negative emotions before calling a call center generally came from previous negative experiences with call centers or their general knowledge of how call centers operate. These experiences affected their expectations and caused them to anticipate problems such as wasting their time, not being in control of the situation and not achieving their goals.

#### **4.4.2. During the call**

##### **4.4.2.1. Emotions**

Support was found for the initial observations from studies 1 and 2 and in previous studies (Bennington, 2000; Tronvoll, 2011) that frustration is one of the dominant emotions in utilitarian service settings. A large majority of the participants said they had feelings of frustration during the call. Out of the 121 participants, 79 reported frustration when recalling their call center encounter. Based on these findings, the analysis was conducted in order to describe the complex interactions that accompany frustration.

##### **4.4.2.2. Frustration, temporary goal blocks, uncertainty and control**

Frustration experienced by the participants was accompanied by uncertainty and control issues and linked to perceived obstacles in goal achievement as suggested by Elfenbein (2007) and Watson and Spence (2007) in their analyses of appraisals and emotions. Based on the participants' responses, it was found that they felt that they faced a long and difficult process with a long wait coupled with limited options for them to change the process. Some of the respondents used words like "fight" or "battle" to describe their experience.

A number of themes were linked to uncertainty during the call. The first of these was simply feeling *uncertain* about the *process* or whether the *goal* would be reached. For example one participant recalled:

*"I'm kind of scared. Because I think I don't have the right call"* (Focus group 15, Respondent 1)

The participant was not sure whether she had actually called the right place and whether the CCR had the necessary competence to solve the problem. Another respondent whose car broke down said that the CCR:

*“kept asking the same questions over and over and I was on the side of the road so I was really worried”* (Focus group 32, Respondent 4)

On the other hand when the CCR was able to solve the problem through careful listening and relevant responses, negative emotions were reduced. For example, one participant said:

*“I know (knew) that she can make (could do) something because she told me: «Oh, I know what's going on»”* (Focus group 20, Respondent 3)

A second theme observed was waiting time as it has previously been noted in service settings (Hui and Tse, 1996; Unziker, 1999) and in findings from study 1a. Waiting time was linked to control and uncertainty because when customers are put on hold, they have no control over the process and have to wait to solve their problem. When they reported their experiences, there was a notion that waiting meant that they had no choice and that the wait was forced on them. The wait also meant that the participants became less certain about whether they were going to reach the right person or complete the process through to the end, i.e. appraisals of goals being temporarily blocked rose while they waited recounted by these groups of respondents as illustrated in focus group 10:

**Respondent 4:** *“Hum, I had a bad image of the company because it was not my first problem with them and sometimes as Respondent 1 said people don't speak French and I had to wait a long time so it was really eee...”*

**Respondent 2:** *“Annoying?”*

**Respondent 4:** *“Yes.”*

The following exchange took place in focus group 5, illustrating the links made by the participants between waiting, control and uncertainty:

**Respondent 2:** *I spoke to 4 different (people) but no one knew how to deal with my demand. I spent a lot of time during each redirecting call and I had to explain my situation*

*again and again.... each person told me different things and I didn't know what to do*  
**(uncertainty)**

*Respondent 3: waiting increases the problem, no listening and understanding of the problem. No support for the problem* **(control-goal blocking)**

*Respondent 4: I have the feeling to have no power because nobody knows where is my purchase* **(control-uncertainty)**

It can therefore be suggested that frustration can grow because of a combination of a goal momentarily blocked plus increased uncertainty and reduced control (Spector, 1978).

In summary, when the CCR shows competence, focuses on relevant topics and pays attention to the problem, uncertainty is reduced and the problem seems to be solvable.

When the CCR does not understand the caller's goals or is not able to solve them while keeping customers waiting, uncertainty increases, caller's goals seem blocked and thus frustration grows. As well as the examples above, a number of themes related to control were observed where the caller felt they could not control the process. Table 4.22 illustrates the main issues discussed by the participants.

**Table 4.22. Study 3. Issues in Caller Frustration and Verbatim extracts**

Control issues	Agent Responsible	Verbatim extracts from generated text
<b>Automatic responses machine</b> The recorded instructions and music reduce the possibility for the caller to take action to solve their problem, thus decreasing control	Unclear	<p><i>"They will keep you with message like 'you are going to wait till someone is in line and this call is going to cost you ...'" (Focus group 6, Respondent 3)</i></p> <p><i>"...there were too many options on the menu on the call like press zero to blablabla and stuff like that." (Focus group 19, Respondent 5)</i></p>
<b>Human as machine</b> The CCR cannot or will not depart from a strict protocol, limiting the ability of the caller to elicit relevant responses to his or her concerns	The CCR	<p><i>"He was obviously following a process but he was not adapting his answers to my concerns. It's really like robots. So you want to speak with someone more empathic and not just saying his speech because it's recorded." (Focus group 1, Respondent 5)</i></p> <p><i>"I had the impression that the girl who answered my question just really doesn't care. She was talking to me like an automatic machine, like; 'I really heard your problem, I'm going to try to find some solution, but you just have to wait'." (Focus group 25, Respondent 4)</i></p>
<b>Multiple transfers and repetition</b> The customers are transferred repeatedly from one person to the next, meaning that they have to explain their problem several times. The repetition to multiple listeners who cannot resolve the problem means that the caller cannot control the process by laying out the details of their case and following through to the desired outcome	Unclear	<p><i>"...because it's difficult to make a point when you tell your story all over again to different kind of people, to different call center operators." (Focus group 25 , Respondent 3)</i></p> <p><i>"Every time you get a new person on the phone and they tell you another explanation of your problem. So it is like you do not know where to start at the end of the call because there is still a problem, nobody can answer it. It is always the same thing." (Focus group 13, Respondent 4)</i></p> <p><i>"...the interlocutors change, well I think there is another issue it's... in the... in these kind of system, the files aren't well followed and you have to explain again this story each time you have a new person on the phone." (Focus group 11, Respondent 1)</i></p>

In many cases the customer attributed the reduction or increase in control to an agent such as the company or the CCR. Table 4.23 illustrates how participants attributed responsibility in those situations in which they felt they lost control during the call.



**Table 4.23. Study 3. Attribution of Responsibility in situations of reduced control**

<b>Responsibility</b> Attributing responsibility to an agent is an indication of who the caller thinks is controlling the situation and in some cases, who is to blame		
<b>No- one:</b> The caller simply doesn't know who to turn to.  <b>Circumstance:</b> The caller recognizes that the event or problem is due to accident	<b>No-one</b>	<i>"I have the feeling to have no power - nobody knows where my purchase is"</i> (Focus group 5, Respondent 4)
	<b>Circumstance</b>	<i>"the problem was not her problem but a technical one"</i> (Focus group 23 , Respondent 2 )
	<b>Self</b>	<i>"I told to the girl and she told me, she can't do anything...in the end she fixed it. It was I make something wrong, so it was my fault"</i> (Focus group 20, Respondent 3)
<b>Company:</b> The caller attributes responsibility to the company providing the service. This can be due to perceived poor organization (unintentional) or perceived as being done on purpose (hostile)	<b>Company Poor management</b>	<i>"I also had the feeling there was no file monitoring, as every time I called ... I had to explain everything again from the start."</i> (Focus group 33, Respondent 2)
	<b>Hostile attributions</b>	<i>"...the way they organize the system . I think they have to concern more about, you know, how to facilitate their customers"</i> (Focus group 14, Respondent 3)  <i>"I think they try to make you stay on the phone as long as possible so you pay more."</i> (Focus group 13, Respondent 3)
<b>CCR:</b> The caller attributes responsibility to the CCR and perceives <b>unintentional</b> incompetence (lack of skills or knowledge) or <b>hostility</b> (rudeness, condescension or aggression) or <b>both</b> incompetence and hostility.	<b>CCR incompetent</b>	<i>"I tried to be calm but the person was really slow and did not find the solutions"</i> (Focus group 13, Respondent 2)  <i>"...even though I selected the language option as English. He was repeatedly asking me the same question"</i> (Focus group 11, Respondent 1)
	<b>CCR Hostile</b>	<i>He said "Call 915 or 914". I asked him which one and he said. "Try both and find out for yourself"</i> (Focus group 17 , Respondent 4)
	<b>CCR Both</b>	<i>"The person of COMPANY NAME was very unpleasant and she did not understand my problem"</i> (Focus group 26, Respondent 1) <i>"I explained that I wanted to change my operator, and then she clearly explains to me that she didn't care. I thought she was incompetent."</i> (Focus group 32, Respondent 1)

#### **4.4.2.3. Intermediate summary of the results**

The second investigative question was about the elements during a call center encounter that underpin the emotion of frustration. Result shows that the initial mixed emotions of happiness, neutral feelings, frustration, anxiety and anger in the sample mostly turned into frustration during the call because of temporary goal-blocking and reduced certainty and control.

#### **4.4.3. After the call: adaptive and maladaptive responses**

The responses to the emotions reported during the call were analyzed and classified into two themes termed adaptive and maladaptive outcomes. Participants who reported frustration showed both maladaptive and adaptive responses in about equal measure.

##### **4.4.3.1. Adaptive responses**

In line with the literature review, some frustrated participants displayed adaptive behaviors by searching for alternative means to their goals, for example by looking for the information online or going to the physical service outlet to get what they wanted. They also looked for support from their friends and family. In contrast to those who predominantly reported anger, the frustrated respondents tried again and persisted by ringing back. Participants who experienced positive emotions but also 12 participants who felt frustration reported *loyalty*. Within the latter group, despite their negative experiences, the respondents believed that the company was not to blame or that the reported call or CCR were not representative of the whole service:

*“For me, it’s not like the company problem. It’s more like the individual. It’s her, the receptionist, who is very rude”* (Focus group 14, Respondent 4);

and the wider perspective-taking view:

*“it is true that we should not either see everything in black because there may be good advisers as very bad in the customer services”* (Focus group 33, Respondent 2).

As well as loyalty, the participants spoke about their feelings after the call. Of the respondents who were angry, anxious or neutral at the beginning of the call, 25% felt some frustration during the call but ended with positive emotions. Either they achieved their goal or found an alternative such as compensation. Others felt that the CCR did his or her best to be polite and helpful. In other words, participants' goals, uncertainty and control perceptions were positive at the end of the call even though they had been through some difficult moments.

#### **4.4.3.2. Maladaptive responses**

Most respondents who suffered frustration reported maladaptive responses. The main outcomes reported were verbal aggression towards the CCR, negative word of mouth, switching behavior and withdrawal from the process by simply ending the phone call without solving the problem.

One very interesting finding was that a large majority of the participants intended to use their service provider or the call center service again even though they felt negative emotions during the encounter experience. The main reason was that they had no alternative or they believed that the competing service would not be better. The author termed this 'spurious' loyalty after Dick and Basu (1994) as opposed to 'loyalty' where the respondents still retained affective loyalty to the service provider or to the call center. Representative of spurious loyalty is the caller who stated:

*"I know it is the same everywhere so even if I change, I know I will have the same problems..."* (Focus group 16, Respondent 4).

The majority who still felt negative emotions such as anger or frustration after the call were less likely to have achieved their goal and had experienced lower control and certainty.

#### **4.4.3.3. Intermediary summary of the results**

The third and last investigative question involved the elements that lead to adaptive or maladaptive outcomes to frustration after a call center encounter. Results show that frustration triggered adaptive outcomes when goals were achieved and/or increased customer control and certainty were supported due to CCR's empathy and professional behavior. Maladaptive outcomes happened when control and certainty remained low even when goals were achieved.

#### **4.4.4. Study 3: Summary of the results**

The aim of study 3 was to provide an answer to the following research question designed to map the emotional process from before the call until after the call.

#### **RQ3: What is the customer emotional experience in a negative call center encounter?**

*IQ3.1: What are the factors that give rise to frustration before calling a call center?*

The results from study 3 showed that at before the call, emotions among the participants were varied. They felt angry, anxious, neutral or frustrated depending on their appraisal of the nature of the events that had led to the initial problem which formed the subject of the call.

*IQ3.2: What are the elements during a call center encounter that underpin the emotion of frustration?*

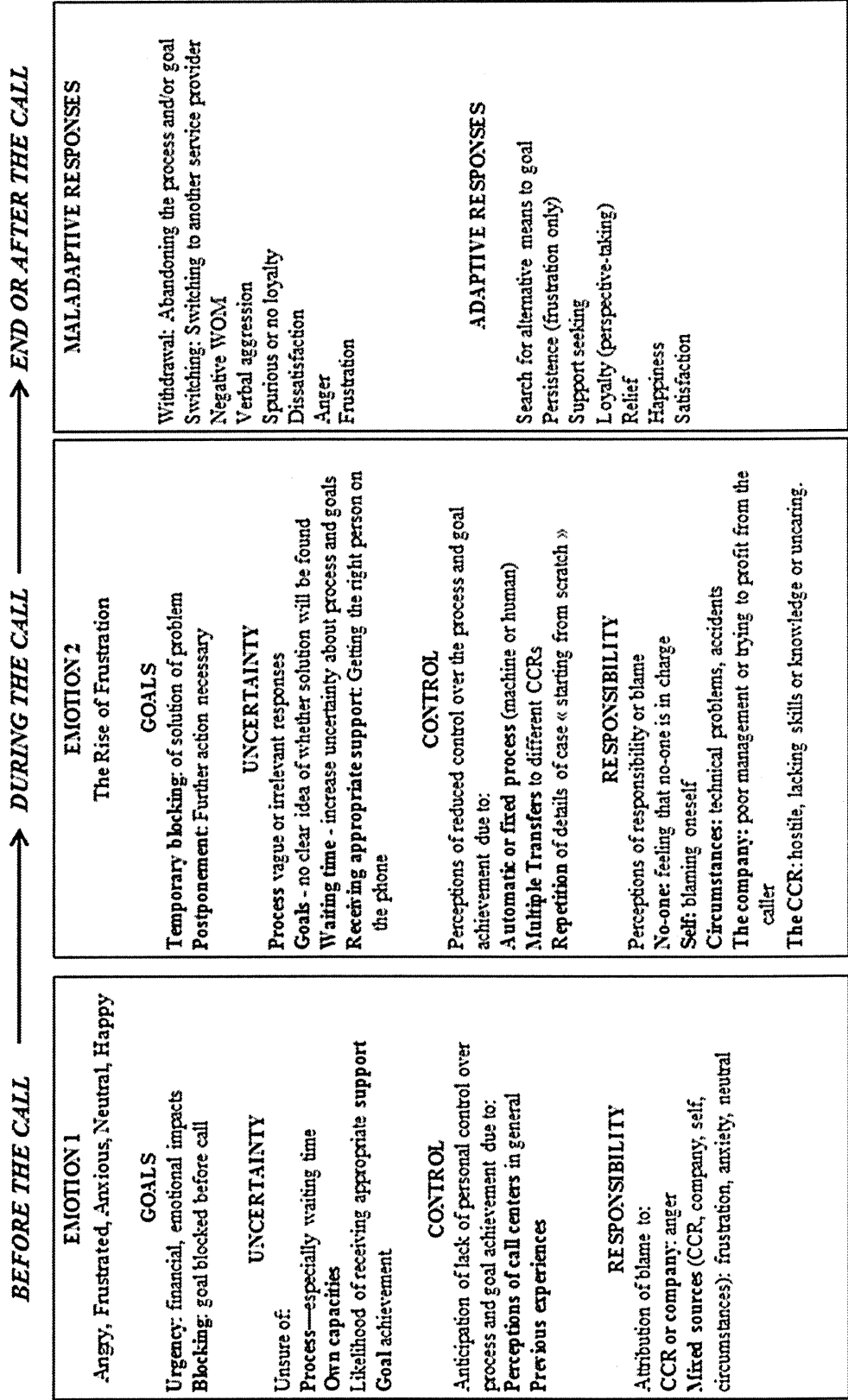
Whatever their initial emotion, it seems that a large number of participants felt frustration during the call. The analysis showed that this came not only from perceived goal obstruction, which is the everyday trigger to frustration (Spector, 1978) but from increasing uncertainty and lowered caller control, with varied attributions of responsibility. The findings suggest that these appraisals can be explained by the characteristics of call center operations, i.e. standard policy and procedures, organizational or managerial control, a consistent (and therefore inflexible), approach, a high number of calls per

minute, taking more than one call at a time (Gilmore, 2001). These particularities are the very elements that the sample quoted as causing their frustration.

*IQ3.3: What are the elements that trigger adaptive or maladaptive responses to frustration after a call center encounter?*

The outcomes of frustration were both adaptive and maladaptive based on many factors. It seems that those callers who are able to regulate their emotions through perspective taking (Axtell et al., 2007; Gross, 1998b) were more philosophical about the service failure and retained loyalty. When the CCR was able to support customer appraisals of control and certainty, participants reported loyalty. One important result from the study 3 is the high number of participants reporting that despite frustration they remain loyal because they have no other choices and their options are limited, i.e. they possess spurious rather than affective or attitudinal loyalty (Dick and Basu, 1994). Figure 4.3 presents a summary of the customer frustration process in a call center encounter.

Figure 4.3. Study 3. The Customer Frustration Process in a Call Center Encounter



From Hudson et al. (2014, p. 22)

#### **4.5. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter involved a presentation of the results for the three empirical studies. Study 1 concerned the development of the emotions scale and was designed as an exploratory study. Data were analyzed based on the *In Vivo* coding procedure with the use of NVivo 8.0. Findings indicate that in a call center context, customers felt positive emotions (e.g. happiness and relief) and negative emotions (stress, anger, discouragement, powerlessness and frustration). Study 1 informed the study 2 in the development of the emotions scale.

Subsequent to study 1, study 2 aimed to test the hypotheses that stemmed from the literature review. Data analysis was conducted with the use of SEM with Amos 21.0. The two-step approach was followed as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). After testing the measurement model, checking the model fit and analyzing the significance levels of the standardized regression coefficients, findings were assessed to confirm or reject the hypotheses. The seven hypotheses were supported. The fit indices exceed the recommended thresholds and the measurement model performed well.

After completing the analysis of findings from study 2, results of study 3 were evaluated. Study 3 investigated the customer emotional process during a negative call center encounter focusing particularly on frustration. Findings indicate that the emotion of frustration is central to the call center experience and is accompanied by appraisals of reduced certainty and control, other responsibility and of goals blocked.

The next chapter (chapter 5) offers a discussion of the results in the context of this thesis and previous research. It also presents the contributions of this thesis on conceptual, empirical and managerial grounds. Finally, it suggests limitations and future research.



**Chapter 5. General Discussion and Conclusions**

<b>Chapter 1</b> <b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rationale for Studying Emotions in a Call Center Setting</li><li>• Research Objectives and Research Questions</li><li>• Summary and Conclusions</li><li>• Structure of the Thesis</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 2</b> <b>Literature Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emotions</li><li>• Appraisal Theory</li><li>• The Appraisal-Tendency Framework</li><li>• Emotions, Satisfaction and Loyalty</li><li>• The Frustration Experience</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 3</b> <b>The Methodological Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pragmatism</li><li>• Mixed-Methods Approach</li><li>• Justifications for the Methodology</li><li>• Methodology for Study 1, Study 2 and Study 3: Aims, procedures, participants, analysis techniques and implications for later phases</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 4</b> <b>Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data Analysis</li><li>• Findings</li><li>• Summary of the Findings and Discussion</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 5</b> <b>General Discussion and Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall Discussion of the Findings</li><li>• Theoretical and Managerial Implications</li><li>• Limitations</li><li>• Areas for Future Research</li><li>• Conclusion</li></ul>

5.1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to provide an answer to the research question:

*What is the role of customer emotions in a call center setting?*

Three research questions were posed, each of them in response to theoretical and knowledge gaps, and which structured the subsequent theoretical discussion, the data collection and analysis. One overall intended contribution and five specific intended contributions were formulated as shown in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1. Overall and Specific Intended Contributions

Overall Intended Contributions	
To study whether customer emotions play a role in utilitarian service settings, and to determine what elements underpin these emotions and their possible outcomes	
Specific Intended Contributions	
1	To identify a set of emotions which are specific to French customers of call centers
2	To test the relationships between emotions, satisfaction and loyalty
3	To test the relative effect of negative and positive emotions on loyalty
4	To contribute through empirical data collection and analysis to the theory that emotions and appraisals are inseparable and form the emotional process
5	To develop the theoretical characterization of frustration and its adaptive and maladaptive outcomes through empirical data collection and analysis and a review of the literature

Table 5.2 provides a summary of the structure of this chapter.

*Table 5.2. Structure of Chapter 5*

<b>Chapter 5</b> General Discussion and Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• General Discussion of the Findings</li><li>• Summary of Theoretical Contributions</li><li>• Managerial Implications</li><li>• Limitations and Future Research Directions</li><li>• Conclusions</li></ul>
--	---

**5.2. General Discussion of the Findings**

**5.2.1. Research Question 1. What are the emotions experienced by call center customers?**

The emotions experienced by call center customers were anger, frustration, powerlessness, stress, discouragement, relief and happiness.

In the literature review in chapter 2 it was noted that although there have been a number of studies of emotions in hedonic services, the role of emotions in the more common utilitarian services such as those provided by call centers has been largely overlooked. A small number of studies have investigated emotions in utilitarian services but differ from this study in that their measurement of emotions is distinct (for example Liljander and Strandvik (1997) use a bipolar scale and Dubé and Morgan (1998) use the PANAS scale with enthusiastic, active and alert versus distress, fear, and guilt). Other authors have investigated single emotions such as frustration, as a moderator of other hypothesized causes such as fairness (Guchait and Namasivayam, 2012), or in the specific case of service failure (Gelbrich, 2010). Many of these studies used artificial settings such as experiments with student samples, apart from Dubé and Morgan (1998) who studied patients in a hospital service setting.

The qualitative study which required participants to recount their emotional experiences in their own words and in a specific contextual setting (call center) meant that the emotions or indicators of an emotional state used in this study were of particular relevance to a call center environment. Because emotions are known to be context specific (Richins, 1997), this approach a) provides a methodologically solid foundation for subsequent studies in customer emotions in suggesting that before proceeding to measurement of emotions, it is worth identifying the particular emotions and their indicators felt *in that particular service setting* rather than using a generally established emotions scale and, b) provides call center practitioners with a 'list' of the major emotions experienced by customers.

In spite of the strength of this approach, a closer look at the emotions that were reported through the lens of appraisal theory (Frijda, 1968) and theorized behavioral outcomes of emotions (Spector, 1975) showed that the concept of what is an emotion is not that simple to determine. The feeling of "*powerlessness*" reported as an emotion through phrases such as '*I felt powerless*' seems clearly to be an appraisal of reduced control when appraisal theory is used. The emotion of "*discouragement*" equally, could also be viewed as a behavioral reaction to an emotion similar to withdrawal (Spector, 1975). The review of the literature revealed that other authors are similarly confusing emotions with cognitive appraisal elements, for example Gelbrich (2010) also uses powerlessness as an emotion. Other authors use the appraisal elements as antecedents of emotions, for example Del Rio et al. (2009) use perceived justice as an antecedent of satisfaction with emotions as a moderator; Gelbrich (2010) also uses blame attribution (responsibility/agency) and informational support (reduced uncertainty) as an antecedent. That's why from study 1, the terms 'positive emotions', 'negative emotional state' and 'indicators of emotions' were used.

Study 3, which provided further qualitative results, confirmed that emotions such as anxiety, anger, frustration and happiness were experienced by callers. The analysis in study



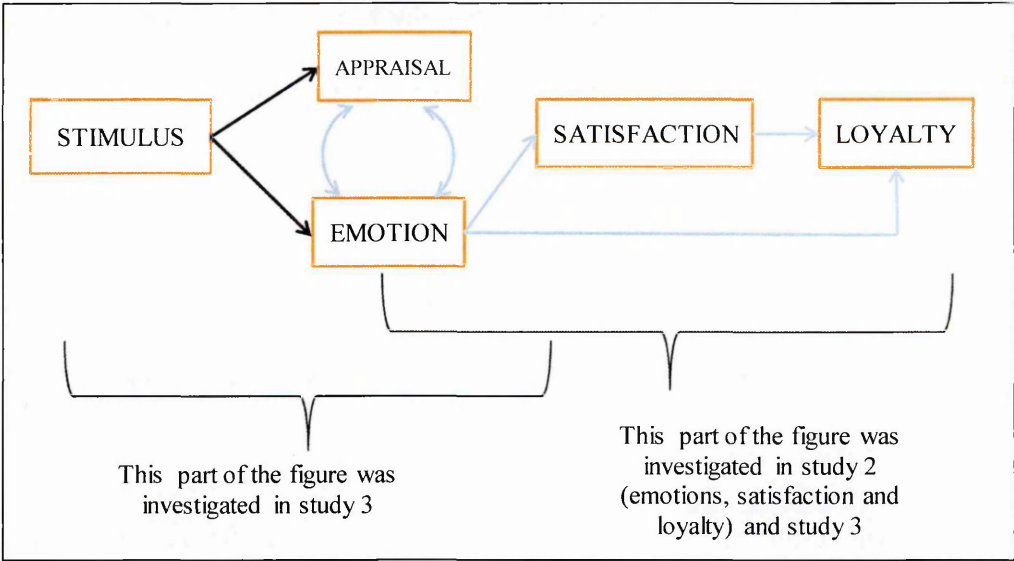
3 revisited the concepts of powerlessness and discouragement as part of the whole emotional experience, providing a more theoretically solid foundation for analysing the emotion of frustration not simply as a verbal expression, but as an *emotional process* in line with the view of Barrett et al. (2007) and Elfenbein (2007).

The first contribution of this study is therefore:

**Contribution 1:** The **major customer indicators of emotions specific to a call center encounter** as expressed by French call center customers are: **anger, frustration, powerlessness, stress, discouragement, relief and happiness.**

In view of the theoretical move towards describing an emotional experience rather than emotions, this thesis suggests that cognitive appraisals and emotions are intertwined. As illustrated in figure 5.1 the holistic emotional process includes both the emotion and the cognitive appraisal of the environment.

**Figure 5.1. The Holistic Emotional Process**



As shown in figure 5.1 this study indicates a move away from the simple idea of cognition as an antecedent of emotion (or vice-versa) in line with Barrett et al. (2007) and Elfenbein (2007), which has been the basis of much of the study of emotions in the marketing and consumer literature. Study of emotional process rather than emotions alone provides a

framework for interpreting reports of emotional experience which can allow for mixing of emotions and cognition by the person who experienced the feeling. The person may not make a distinction for example between ‘feeling’ powerless and ‘being’ powerless or ‘the situation left me powerless’. When these sorts of statements are analysed using appraisal theory, a clearer picture of the emotional experience is obtained since there is a better underlying conceptual framework.

### **5.2.2. Research Question 2. What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a customer call center encounter?**

The results of the survey of call center customers showed that emotions have a significant role in determining satisfaction and loyalty. Approximately 76% of the variance in satisfaction, and 46% of loyalty could be predicted by positive emotions and negative emotional state.

The first of these results were directly in line with the assertions by Oliver (1980, 1993) that satisfaction possesses a large affective component in addition to the more cognitive disconfirmation component. In other words, it would be expected that satisfaction would correlate highly with positive emotions because it is – partially – an emotion. Some emotions literature includes satisfaction as an emotion (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005) but some does not (Richins, 1997). In parallel, some satisfaction literature conceptualizes satisfaction in entirely emotional terms (Arnould and Price, 1993), whereas others use only cognitive terms reflecting the performance-expectancy gap approach (Athanasopoulos, 2000).

The results of this study contribute to the continuing discussion about the nature of satisfaction in the literature (see Giese and Cote, 2000 for a review), by showing that when measured using a neutral overall satisfaction item, allowing the respondent to decide on his or her conceptualization of satisfaction (Szymanski and Henard, 2001), it does indeed contain a strong affective element. This conclusion is reached in view of the strong

positive relationship measured between positive emotions of relief and happiness on the one hand and satisfaction on the other.

**Contribution 2:** therefore, is to **confirm** that customer satisfaction comprises a strong affective element even when expressed in neither emotional nor cognitive terms i.e. **emotions play a significant role in customer satisfaction in a call center setting**, in addition the model supports the hypothesis that **emotions also affect loyalty**.

The third contribution concerns the relative effect of positive emotions and negative emotional state on loyalty. Ever since the publication by Anderson (1998) which empirically supported the hypothesis that dissatisfaction had a greater effect on negative word of mouth (NWOM) than satisfaction on positive word of mouth (PWOM) it is generally recognized that bad experiences have stronger impacts than positive experiences on subsequent customer outcomes such as attitudes and behavior (Baumeister et al., 2001; Einhorn and Hogarth, 1981; Kahneman and Tversky, 1979).

Surprisingly, when the literature was searched it was found that there were almost no studies testing the relative effects of both positive and negative emotions on loyalty.

Chebat and Slusarczyk's (2005) study was one example found, and slightly higher effects of negative emotions ( $\beta = -0.39$ ) rather than positive emotions ( $\beta = +0.31$ ) on loyalty were presented in the findings but not discussed. The sample consisted of 186 customers (complainants) of a bank. DeWitt et al. (2008) also investigated emotions and loyalty in a scenario-based experiment in the hospitality sector with a student sample. They found that negative and positive emotions contributed equally to loyalty. Emotions in DeWitt et al's (2008) work were used as mediating variables between justice perceptions and loyalty, whereas 'fairness' or justice was not an appraisal that emerged to any great degree in this thesis in the qualitative study 3 of customer emotions in a call center encounter.



The results of this thesis show that negative emotional state decreases loyalty ( $\beta = -0.33$ ) more than positive emotions increase it ( $\beta = +0.11$ ). The analysis of responses from 1440 customers of a major French telecom service provider shows empirical support for the intuition that negative emotional state has a stronger effect on subsequent loyalty behavior than positive emotions do. This is a relationship that is probably widely believed and felt by marketers (Anderson, 1998), but for which very little explicit empirical support has been found (Chebat and Slusarczyk, 2005). An explanation could be that customers with bad moods generate more information processing than those with good moods, and negative information has a stronger lasting effect than positive information (Baumeister et al., 2001). Therefore, the emotional ‘baggage’ from previous experience or from reputation or from friend’s experience (Elfenbein, 2007) could generate more effect on customers’ attitude (e.g. loyalty).

**Contribution 3:** therefore, is to **provide** empirical evidence from a field survey in a real service setting which supports the untested hypothesis **that loyalty diminishes as negative emotional state increases. This negative effect is stronger than the effect of positive emotions increasing loyalty.**

The reason for this strong effect of negative emotional state on loyalty was not very clear. This being the case, study 3 was carried out in order to understand the factors underlying this relationship, and to fully understand the emotional process that occurred during the encounter. The findings described in chapters 4 and 5 together with indications from some research done on customer emotions in utilitarian service sectors (e.g. Tronvoll, 2011), and alluded to in the literature on customers of call centers (Bennington, 2000; Unzicker, 1999; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996) was that frustration was a common and important customer emotion in the context of utilitarian services, and so the analysis focused on why this was so.

Finally, the observation that negative emotional state decreases loyalty ( $\beta = -0.33$ ) more strongly than satisfaction increases loyalty ( $\beta = +0.29$ ) is an unexpected finding arising from the way the measurement was designed i.e. through the separation of the three constructs of positive emotions, negative emotional state and satisfaction. By doing this, support is found firstly for the notion that positive emotions and negative emotional state are distinct dimensions of emotions and have distinct effects on other independent variables such as satisfaction and loyalty. Secondly, and more importantly this observation shows that negative emotions play a more important role in determining loyalty than satisfaction does. This result can certainly contribute to the satisfaction-loyalty literature (Kamakura et al., 2002; Rust et al., 1999; Szymanski and Henard, 2001) in providing a competing and important predictor for loyalty other than satisfaction, at least in utilitarian service contexts such as a call center setting.

**Contribution 4:** therefore, is to have found that **negative emotional state has a stronger effect on loyalty than satisfaction does.**

### **5.2.3. Research Question 3. What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter?**

The results of study 3, which gathered customer's stories of negative experiences, suggest that the disembodied nature of modern service interactions through various technological interfaces may be creating the exact environment that breeds frustration.

This environment, analysed through appraisal theory comprised several major factors that are worth summarizing. First, it was confirmed that the **blocking of goals** even temporarily was an appraisal that most frustrated participants made in line with theory (Spector, 1978). When callers felt they were not going to get the information they wanted or the solution they needed quickly or at all, they became frustrated. If **the aim of the call** was important or urgent to the caller, frustration was exacerbated.

Second, appraisals of **reduced certainty and control** were identified as key in the experience of frustration. These came about through features such as automated replies, multiple transfers or waiting time. Third were appraisals of **agency and responsibility**. When the caller blamed the CCR or company rather than circumstance, for example by judging the CCR or company as incompetent or the CCR hostile, frustration occurred.

Finally, the lack of physical interaction with the service provider means that the caller cannot use his/her social skills such as adapting his/her expressions to the other, empathizing, persuading and other tactics that are used in daily interpersonal interactions.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis is that the very nature of call center operations, i.e. standard policy and procedures, organizational or managerial control, a consistent (and inflexible) approach, a high number of calls per minute, taking more than one call at a time (Gilmore, 2001) is what the sample found frustrating.

The responses to frustration were both adaptive (for example persistence or searching for alternative means to achieve goals) and maladaptive (anger, aggression or withdrawal), depending on many factors, both within and beyond the control of the service. It seems that those callers who are able to regulate their emotions through perspective taking (Axtell et al., 2007; Gross, 1998b) were more philosophical about the service failure and retained loyalty. Loyalty seemed also to occur in some cases when the CCR was able to restore feelings of control and certainty. If feelings of control are not restored, negative emotional state might persist or increase and loyalty is decreased. The decrease in loyalty can be behavioral and the customer switches. It can also be a decrease in attitudinal or affective loyalty which will have effects on NWOM and switching as soon as a better service option comes along. One important finding from the study is the high frequency of statements expressing the idea that people only remain loyal to their service provider following frustration experiences because their options are limited, i.e. they possess spurious rather than affective or attitudinal loyalty (Dick and Basu, 1994).

The fifth and sixth contributions of this thesis are as follows. First, there are very few studies of frustration as an emotion *per se*, and even fewer in a customer setting (Guchait and Namasivayam, 2012). By providing a context as important as a call center encounter, an unavoidable experience for modern day consumers, the dynamics of frustration have been tracked along with the environmental triggers that underpin this emotion, showing not only the cognitive appraisal elements of a 'static' emotion, but illustrating how those appraisal components change over the short time of call, producing frustration and the varied responses to it.

As mentioned previously, emotions do not occur in a vacuum, and in line with both calls for understanding discrete emotions (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005) and understanding them in terms of their context as an emotional process (Barrett et al., 2007) this investigation provides an in-depth study of customer frustration in a call center encounter.

Second, the results are also in accordance with the functional view of emotions (Keltner and Haidt, 1999) and illustrate responses to frustration that are both adaptive like persistence or looking for alternative means to one's goal, and maladaptive such as verbal aggression and withdrawal or switching.

One of the main interests of this finding is that it moves away from the simple assumption that positive emotions lead to positive outcomes and negative emotions lead to negative outcomes, in line with the suggestions by Mattson et al. (2004) in the context of complaints, suggesting that deactivating emotions such as sadness had no effect on loyalty, whereas activated emotions such as anger had a negative effect. The method used in study 2 through quantitative data analysis was not sufficient to provide this level of analysis in that spurious loyalty (I stay with my service because I have to) was not measured, and the particularities of each emotional experience (the emotion plus the appraisal of the stimulus causing the emotional process) was not measurable.

In the case of frustration, it is suggested that this particular emotion can lead to both adaptive or maladaptive outcomes (renewed effort, persistence vs. anger or withdrawal), which supports the theoretical proposals by Spector (1975, 1978) which have not been tested empirically in the marketing and consumer literature, as far as the author has been able to confirm.

**Contribution 5:** The results map the **emotional process** in a call center encounter, and show that **emotions and appraisals are inseparable** and form the emotional process.

**Contribution 6:** Develops through empirical data collection and analysis, together with consideration of the literature a **theoretical characterization of frustration**. This characterization shows that the experience of frustration is closely tied to appraisals of goal desirability, increased uncertainty, reduced control, other (and not self) responsibility, anticipated and experienced time and effort expenditure. A necessary pre-condition of frustration is that one's goal is seen to be blocked. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that frustration can have both positive and negative outcomes in customer service encounters depending on appraisal factors occurring or existing during the emotional process, thus providing empirical support to the propositions made by Spector (1975, 1978).

### **5.3. Summary of Theoretical Contributions**

From the preceding discussion and presentation of the contributions made by this thesis, it can be said that overall the contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate that customer emotions, both positive and negative play an important role in the customer experience during a call center encounter. In table 5.3 below, a summary of the overall and specific theoretical contributions is made.

**Table 5.3. Summary of Overall and Specific Theoretical Contributions**

Overall Theoretical Contributions	
Customer emotions play a role in utilitarian service settings, and call center services as they are structured today can cause negative appraisals and emotions, in particular frustration	
Emotions have been shown to play a strong role in customer satisfaction and loyalty	
Specific Theoretical Contributions	
1	The major customer indicators of emotions specific to a call center encounter as expressed by French call center customers are: relief, happiness, anger, frustration, powerlessness, stress and discouragement
2	Positive emotions have a strong positive relationship, and negative emotional state a medium negative relationship with satisfaction even in customers of a utilitarian call center service
3	Negative emotional state decreases loyalty more strongly than positive emotions increase loyalty
4	Negative emotional state has a stronger effect on loyalty than satisfaction does
5	Emotions and appraisals are inseparable and form the emotional process
6	The theoretical characterization of frustration and its adaptive and maladaptive outcomes has been developed through empirical data collection and analysis and a review of the literature

#### 5.4. Managerial Implications

There are several implications for call center service providers that can be suggested from this study. First and foremost is the answer to the question “Do customer emotions play a role in a call center encounter?” The answer is yes, they do.

The **immediate managerial implications** are therefore that call centers need to understand:

- What customer emotions are most commonly experienced,

- What the effect of those emotions is on important outcomes which ensure their continued success, namely customer satisfaction and loyalty; and
- Why those emotions occur

Study 1 provides the answer to the first question by providing insights into the emotions reported by call center customers, supported in the second qualitative study (study 3) where similar reports of anger, frustration, powerlessness, discouragement and anxiety or stress are found. Fortunately, positive emotions are also experienced, such as happiness and relief.

Study 2 provides the answer to the second question, showing that:

- Customers experiencing positive emotions are highly satisfied, and that negative emotional state will reduce satisfaction somewhat,
- Negative emotional state has a stronger effect on loyalty than satisfaction does

Both dissatisfaction and negative experiences are known to decrease loyalty more than satisfaction and positive experiences increase loyalty (Anderson, 1998). By extension this study suggests that negative emotional state has more effect on loyalty than positive emotions and satisfaction. Moreover the emotional process indicates that emotions feed into more long term attitudes and behavior, with each experience of an emotion either supporting or diminishing that attitude or behavior. In the case of call centers, the data shows that callers begin the call with some negative emotional ‘baggage’ from previous experiences or from reputation or from friends’ experiences. The effect of ‘another’ negative experience and negative emotions has a stronger enhancing effect than a single two-positive emotions (e.g. happy and relief) which will change the previous negative attitude only a little.

Therefore and more importantly for their long-term customer retention is that negative emotional state has a stronger effect on loyalty than positive emotions and satisfaction. In



other words, making sure that customers do not experience negative emotions during the encounter is much more important than ensuring that they experience positive emotions or are satisfied.

The findings highlight the need for call center managers to regularly measure other variables than satisfaction, behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (WOM). The measurement of constructs such as negative emotions will provide call center managers a more complete understanding of their customers since this study showed the significant effect of emotions and more particularly negative emotions on behavioral outcomes.

The managerial implication is therefore: keeping customers satisfied and happy is not enough to keep them loyal.

In order to retain customer loyalty, managers need therefore to avoid engendering negative emotions in their customers. For this, they need to understand what the factors are in the service they provide that customers find frustrating. Study 3 goes some way to answering this question.

It is clear from study 3 that there is a mismatch between call center goals of efficiency and quality from a quantitative point of view which involve monitoring number of calls, reducing time spent with the customer, routinization and sticking to a script (Ayios and Harris, 2005; Gilmore, 2001; Taylor and Bain, 2001; Wong and Sohal, 2003) and the qualitative, subjective needs of callers. This mismatch is giving rise to widespread feelings of frustration which seems from this study to be linked with either actual switching behavior or spurious loyalty. As Dick and Basu (1994) explained spurious loyalty (e.g. where a relative attitude is inexistent), customers may be motivated to search for alternatives and may not resist to persuasion from competitors. Therefore, spurious loyalty and switching can be seen as a threat for those operators who cannot provide at least a semblance of empathetic, tailor-made services, because the frustration arising from these

service encounters means that customers possess little attitudinal loyalty and will move to alternative providers as soon as something better comes on to the market. In this case managers should pay attention to attitudinal loyalty since it keeps customers locked in for longer.

The results from study 3 indicate that waiting time, multiple transfers, music and automatic responses, coupled with uncertainty about whether the problem will be solved and who can take charge of the problem are conditions that underpin frustration. In addition, some customers are happy to find alternative means to solve their problems.

One possibility therefore, could be for organizations with call center services to:

- Consider providing more and better customer information before the call on where to phone for specific problems, and
- To re-organize their services into specialized units along with an emergency service manned by generalist employees. This contrasts with the dominant current model where all employees are trained to deal with all types of problem; and
- Ensure multiple information or problem-solving outlets so customers can easily switch from a call center to another source of help

In spite of some management and cost challenges in this type of structure, it would do away with the main frustrators: waiting time, music, transfers and also provide more human specialized attention with some possibility for deviating from a rigid script. In addition, frustration experiences can be transformed into adaptive responses if other means of achieving goals are provided.

A summary of the overall and specific managerial implications is given in table 5.4.

*Table 5.4. Summary of the Overall and Specific Managerial Implications*

Overall Managerial Implications	
Call center customer emotions need to be managed in order to provide satisfactory customer experience	
Specific Managerial Implications	
1	The major customer indicators of emotions specific to a call center encounter as expressed by French call center customers are: relief, happiness, anger, frustration, powerlessness, stress and discouragement. Frustration and anger are dominant emotions in the customer call center experience
2	Operational measures of satisfaction currently used are not sufficient. Emotions need to be measured to determine satisfaction
3	It is more important to avoid negative emotional state than to promote positive emotions to ensure customer loyalty
4	It is more important to pay attention to negative emotional state than to focus on satisfaction to ensure customer loyalty
5	Multiple transfers, waiting time, music, inflexible/automatic responses, CCR incompetence and/or hostility generate frustration
6	Frustration can be managed to produce adaptive outcomes if alternative means are given for achieving the goal by reducing uncertainty and increasing customer control through demonstrating personalized attention and providing courteous quick service (control) and have some suggestions ready for how the customer can solve his/her problem (goal achievement/alternative means)

Table 5.5 provides a summary of the overall research gaps, research questions, theoretical contributions and managerial implications. Table 5.6 provides a summary of the specific research gaps, research questions, theoretical contributions and managerial implications

*Table 5.5. Summary of the Overall Research Gaps, Overall Research Questions, Overall Theoretical Contributions and Overall Managerial Implications*

Overall Research Gaps	Overall Research Question	Overall Theoretical Contributions	Overall Managerial Implications
Customer emotions have not been considered to be of importance in utilitarian services such as call centers  The focus has been on industry-driven operational metrics and cognitive measures of antecedents of satisfaction	<b>What is the role of customer emotions in a call center setting?</b>	Customer emotions play a role in utilitarian service settings, and call center services as they are structured today can cause negative appraisals and emotions, in particular frustration  Emotions have been shown to play a strong role in customer satisfaction and loyalty	Call center customer emotions need to be managed in order to provide satisfactory customer experience

*Table 5.6. Summary of the Specific Research Gaps, Specific Research Questions, Specific Theoretical Contributions and Specific Managerial Implications*

Research Gaps	Research Questions	Theoretical Contributions	Managerial Implications
<p>1. Particular emotions are associated with their context and can be culturally bound.</p> <p>2. Subjective description with semantic content provides more accurate representation of the emotion than using a general emotions scale</p> <p>3. Antecedents of customer satisfaction are both cognitive and emotional, but the cognitive view is dominant in the call center industry, so the role of emotions in determining satisfaction is unknown</p> <p>4. Emotions are known to play a role in predicting satisfaction in hedonic services, but the relationship has not been investigated to any great degree in utilitarian service settings</p> <p>5. Satisfaction is not always a good predictor of loyalty, and emotions may be one of the reasons</p> <p>6. The relationship between emotions and loyalty is not well understood, and has not been the subject of much empirical study in the utilitarian service sector</p> <p>7. Research in emotions shows that negative and positive emotions are distinct dimensions of the emotions construct</p> <p>8. Positive and negative emotions have different and not necessarily predictable impacts on satisfaction and loyalty</p> <p>9. Emotions have been conceptualized as separate from cognitive appraisals of services, and the emotional experience combining appraisals and emotions and their customer outcomes has not been researched</p> <p>10. Frustration is an emotion widely experienced in a call center setting but it has not been characterized theoretically in the consumer literature</p>	<p>1. What are the emotions experienced by call center customers?</p> <p>2. What is the effect of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty in a customer call center encounter?</p> <p>3. What is the customer emotional experience during a negative call center encounter?</p>	<p>1. Identification of indicators of emotions which are specific to French customers of call centers</p> <p>2. Positive emotions have a strong positive relationship, and negative emotional states a medium negative relationship with satisfaction even in customers of a utilitarian call center service</p> <p>3. Negative emotional state decreases loyalty more strongly than positive emotions increase loyalty</p> <p>4. Negative emotional state has a stronger effect on loyalty than satisfaction does</p> <p>5. Demonstration through empirical data collection and analysis that emotions and appraisals are inseparable and form the emotional process</p> <p>6. Development of the theoretical characterization of frustration and its adaptive and maladaptive outcomes through empirical data collection and analysis and a review of the literature</p>	<p>1. Customers feel powerless, frustrated, angry, discouraged and stressed, but can also experience happiness or relief. Frustration and anger are dominant emotions in the customer call center experience</p> <p>2. Operational measures of satisfaction currently used are not sufficient. Emotions need to be measured to determine satisfaction</p> <p>3. It is more important to avoid negative emotional state than to promote positive emotions to ensure customer loyalty</p> <p>4. It is more important to pay attention to negative emotional state than to focus on satisfaction to ensure customer loyalty</p> <p>5. Multiple transfers, waiting time, music, inflexible/automatic responses, CCR incompetence and/or hostility generate frustration</p> <p>6. Frustration can be managed to produce adaptive outcomes if alternative means are given for achieving the goal by reducing uncertainty and increasing customer control through demonstrating personalized attention and providing courteous quick service (control) and have some suggestions ready for how the customer can solve his/her problem (goal achievement/alternative means)</p>

## **5.5. Limitations and future research directions**

### **5.5.1. Limitations**

As with any empirical research, this thesis is not without limitations. Limitations are presented sequentially in accordance with the three empirical studies. These are about research design, scales, sampling and data collection.

The first limitation concerns the scale development and the measurement of emotions and involves therefore study 1 and study 2. These studies used reports of emotions and participants did not mention emotions *per se* only but also indicators of emotions, particularly for the construct of negative emotions (e.g. powerless and discouraged). This means that the scale may not be valid from a strictly theoretical point of view. When the participant answers 'I felt ....', the adjective is not necessarily an emotion in the strictest theoretical sense. However, it is worth using this method because it captures an authentic context-based measure.

The second limitation is about the measurement of satisfaction. There is an ongoing debate on the definition and operationalization of this construct. It seems difficult to separate cognitive from emotional satisfaction and differentiate satisfaction from emotions. Previous research indicates that measurement of satisfaction has traditionally been cognitive in nature, and does not sufficiently take account of measures of affect (Bigné et al., 2008; Oliver, 1997). This may have an impact on participants' answers if they do not differentiate satisfaction from emotions. The results of this study would have been more robust if cognitive versus emotional satisfaction had been more clearly differentiated in measurement terms.

The third limitation concerns the lack of investigation on the potential moderators of the relationships studied. Moderators may modify either the form and/or the strength of the relationship between a predictor and a criterion variable (Sharma et al., 1981). As for the satisfaction-loyalty link previous research (Rust et al., 1999; Szymanski and Henard, 2001)



showed that satisfaction does not fully explain the variance in loyalty. Finally, there is little research investigating the influence of moderators on the emotions-satisfaction link and on the emotions-loyalty link. Therefore, studying the impact of moderating variables between these relationships may have better explain the results of this study.

The fourth limitation concerns the research design of the exploratory studies (study 1 and study 3). The results of exploratory research using focus groups with all the attendant weaknesses such as group-think, dominant personalities, moderator style (McDonald, 1993; Prince and Davies, 2001) may not yield representative results, and so caution must be used in attempting any generalizations.

The fifth limitation involves the selection of participants, more particularly in study 2 and 3. First the sample of participants in study 2 was a convenience sample of French respondents. As a non-probabilistic method, this will have an impact on results and any generalizations cannot be made. In study 3, the sample was mostly made up of young, French participants. This may limit the generalizability of our findings to other cultures and ages, so additional research is needed to understand whether frustration experiences are culturally bound or rather universally featured, and whether frustration arises differently in function of age. It would be of interest therefore to extend the study of the emotional process (study 3) to a sample with higher age diversity.

The reference supporting the use of a non-probability sample (Yeager et al., 2011) in the methodology chapter is the sixth limitation since the article was not published in a ranked journal. However and to our best knowledge, no better reference was found.

Finally, the choice of the company in study 2 is also a limitation. Although findings are significant with customers of the telecommunication company, the results may vary for another telecommunication company, a company from a different service sector or another type of customer (for instance, business-to-business clients).



Despite their existence, these limitations offer some avenues for future research which is introduced in the next section.

### **5.5.2. Future Areas of Research**

Several possibilities for future research can be identified following the completion of this thesis.

Firstly, future research can investigate whether call centers which provide specialized services rather than the generalist services with multiple transfers and/or possibilities for employee initiative in problem solving rather than sticking to a script result in improved customer responses.

A second possibility is to include psycho-demographic characteristics of the customer into analyses of emotional and behavioral responses to disembodied service encounters as it appears that certain emotional regulation traits such as perspective-taking improve outcomes. Other moderators of emotions in a service setting such as cultural display rules (Ekman, 1972), personality, and experience could also be studied to determine how the emotional process varies in consequence. Regarding the satisfaction-loyalty link, the investigation of personal, relational and marketplace moderators as gender, age, level of expertise, involvement or switching costs could provide more insights about how they influence this relationship. The study of moderators is therefore something worth exploring in future research.

Thirdly, only call center services were investigated here, which is an example of a disembodied, or 'lean and remote' service (Bitner, 1992) with limited physical and visual cues, which means that important cues are missing in the mental representation of the emotional experience (Barrett, 2007). This being the case, it could be that uncertainty is higher than in a real setting when an individual can assess the surroundings to gain a more complete understanding of the event causing the emotion. In support of this notion, uncertainty was one of the major appraisal dimensions noted in the frustration experience

in study 3. It would therefore be interesting to compare the emotional process in face-to-face and disembodied services through a case study approach a) to investigate further the finding that the automatic and inhuman nature of call center encounters foster frustration and b) to test whether the lack of direct physical cues affects appraisals of control, uncertainty and attribution of responsibility and emotions.

Fourthly, since the use of appraisal theory (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985; Watson and Spence, 2007) has proved to be of great advantage in this study in determining the emotional process, it would be of interest to carry out experimental studies varying the appraisal features of a stimulus such as agency, control and uncertainty to measure how and to what degree different appraisals interact with emotions and their consequences. Quantitative studies using emotions as moderators of justice perceptions and customer outcomes (Chandrashekar et al., 2007; Del Rio et al., 2009) or agency as moderators of frustration (Gelbrich, 2010) indicate that this is a promising line of research that has not yet been undertaken in a systematic way.

Finally, drawing on the appraisal-tendency framework (Lerner and Keltner, 2000; 2001) future research can investigate the effect of specific emotions of the same valence on behavioral outcomes. The underlying appraisal themes of each emotion could provide further information.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

This thesis began with the aim of answering the question “What is the role of customer emotions in a call center setting?”. Ten research gaps, three research questions and six contributions were developed as a result of this work, along with six broad managerial implications.

The answer to the research question is that emotions play an undoubtedly important role in a customer call center setting. This is a finding that contradicts the possible assumption that in a service used for utilitarian ends, quality and performance would be the prime

elements in the customer experience. It also provides some evidence that the methods used in the call center industry for measuring customer satisfaction may not be appropriate, and that emotions need to be taken into account. Because this is a somewhat under-researched domain, future research can usefully pursue the area of emotions in utilitarian service settings, to enable improved service in a multitude of sectors.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adomaitiene, R. and Slatkeviciene, G. (2008). Employee satisfaction and service quality in contact centres. *Economics and Management*, 13, 770-775.
- Agustin, C. and Singh, J. (2005). Curvilinear effects of consumer loyalty determinants in relational exchanges. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 42(1), 96-108.
- Ahghari, M. and Balcioglu, B. (2009). Benefits of cross-training in a skill-based routing contact center with priority queues and impatient customers. *IIE Transactions*, 41(6), 524-536.
- Amabile, T.M., Barsade, S.G., Mueller, J.S. and Staw, B.M. (2005). Affect and creativity at work. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(3), 367-403.
- Anderson, E.W. (1998). Customer satisfaction and word of mouth. *Journal of Service Research*, 1(1), 5-17.
- Anderson, J.C. and Gerbing, D.W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3), 411-423.
- Anderson, E. W. and Sullivan, M.W. (1993). The antecedents and consequences of customer satisfaction for firms. *Marketing Science*, 12(2), 125-43.
- Anton, J. (1997). *Call Center Management by the Numbers*. Purdue University Press, West Lafayette, IN.
- Armistead, C, Kiely, J, Hole, L. and Prescott, J. (2002). An exploration of managerial issues in call centres. *Managing Service Quality*, 12(4), 246-256.
- Arnould, E.J. and Price, L.L. (1993). River Magic: Extraordinary experience and the extended service encounter. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(1), 24-45.
- Athanassopoulos, A. D. (2000). Customer satisfaction cues to support market segmentation and explain switching behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 47(3), 191-207.
- Avramidis, A.N., Deslauriers, A. and L'Ecuyer, P. (2004). Modeling daily arrivals to a telephone call center. *Management Science*, 50(7), 896-908.
- Axtell, C. M., Parker, S. K., Holman, D. and Totterdell, P. (2007). Enhancing customer service: Perspective taking in a call centre. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 16(2), 141-168.
- Ayios, A., and Harris, L. (2005). Customers relationships in the e-economy: Mutual friends or just a veneering?. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 8(4), 454-469.
- Babin, B. and Babin, L. (2001). Seeking, something different? A model of schema typicality, consumer affect, purchase intentions and perceived shopping value. *Journal of Business Research*, 54(2), 89-96.
- Babin, B. J., Darden, W. R. and Babin, L. A. (1998). Negative emotions in marketing research: affect or artifact? *Journal of Business Research*, 42(3), 271-285.

- Babin, B.J., Darden, W.R. and Griffin, M. (1994). Work and/or fun? Measuring hedonic and utilitarian shopping. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(4), 644-656.
- Bachmann, D.P., Elfrink, J. and Vazzana, G. (1996). Tracking the progress of e-mail versus snail mail. *Marketing Research*, 8(2), 31-35.
- Bagozzi, R. P., and Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 16(1), 74-94.
- Baron, R. and Kenny, D. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychology: conceptual, strategic and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173-1182.
- Barrett, L. F., Mesquita, B., Ochsner, K. N. and Gross, J. J. (2007). The experience of emotion. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, 373-403.
- Bartunek, J.M. and Rhynes, S.L. (2010). The construction and contributions of "implications for practice": What's in them and what might they offer?. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(1), 100-117.
- Batra, R. and Ahtola, O.T. (1991). Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian sources of consumer attitudes. *Marketing Letters*, 2(2), 159-170.
- Batra, R. and Ray, M.L. (1986). Affective responses mediating acceptance of advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(2), 234-249.
- Baumeister, R.F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C. and Vohs, K.D. (2001). Bad is stronger than good. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(4), 323-370.
- Bee, C. C. and Madrigal, R. (2013). Consumer uncertainty: The influence of anticipatory emotions on ambivalence, attitudes, and intentions. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 12(5), 370-381.
- Bei, L.T. and Chiao, Y.C. (2001). An integrated model for the effects of perceived product, perceived service quality, and perceived price fairness on consumer satisfaction and loyalty. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behaviour*, 14, 125-140.
- Bennington, L. and Cummane, J. (1998). Customer satisfaction, loyalty and public services. Paper presented at the EIASM 8th Workshop on Quality Management in Services, Ingolstadt, Germany, April, 429-52.
- Bennington, L., Cummane, J. and Conn, P. (2000). Customer satisfaction and call centers: an Australian study. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 11(2), 162-173.
- Berry, L.L. (1983). Relationship marketing. In Berry, L.L., Shostack, G.L. and Upah, G.D.. Eds. *Emerging perspectives on services marketing*, pp.25-28. Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association.
- Bielen, F. and Demoulin, N. (2007). Waiting time influence on the satisfaction-loyalty relationship in services. *Managing Service Quality*, 17(2), 174-193.
- Bigné, J. E., Mattila, A. S. and Andreu, L. (2008). The impact of experiential consumption cognitions and emotions on behavioral intentions. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 22(4), 303-315.

- Bitner, M. J. (1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(2), 57-71.
- Bitner, M.J., Booms, B.H. and Mohr, L.A. (1994). Critical service encounters: the employees' viewpoint. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(4), 95-106.
- Bitner, M.J., Booms, B.H. and Tetreault, M.S. (1990). The service encounter: diagnosing favorable and unfavorable incidents. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(1), 71-84.
- Blodgett, J.G., Granbois, D.H. and Walters, R.G. (1993). The effects of perceived justice on complainants' negative word-of-mouth behavior and repatronage intentions. *Journal of Retailing*, 69(4), 399-428.
- Bloemer, J. and de Ruyter, K. (1998). On the relationship between store image, store satisfaction and store loyalty. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32(5/6), 499-513.
- Bloemer, J. and de Ruyter, K. (1999). Customer loyalty in high and low involvement service settings: The moderating impact of positive emotions. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15, 315-330.
- Bloemer, J.M.M., de Ruyter, K. and Wetzels, M. (1999). Linking perceived service quality and service loyalty: a multi-dimensional perspective. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(11/12), 1082 – 1106.
- Bonnefoy-Claudet, L. and Ghantous, N. (2013). Emotions' impact on tourists' satisfaction with ski resorts: The mediating role of perceived value. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(6), 624-637.
- Bordoloi, S.K. (2004). Agent recruitment planning in knowledge-intensive call centers. *Journal of Service Research*, 6(3), 309-23.
- Bougie, R., Piders, R. and Zeelenberg, M. (2003). Angry customers don't come back, they get back: The experience and behavioral implications of anger and dissatisfaction in services. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 3 (4), 377-393.
- Brady, M. K., and Cronin, J. J. (2001). Some new thoughts on conceptualizing perceived service quality: a hierarchical approach. *Journal of Marketing*, 65(3), 34-49.
- Brakus, J.J., Schmitt, B.H. and Zarantonello, L. (2009). Brand Experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty?. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(3), 52-68.
- Brandt, A. and Brandt, M. (1999). On a two-queue priority system with impatience and its application to a call center. *Methodology and Computing in Applied Probability*, 1(2), 191-210.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis on psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Brislin, R.W. (1970). Back-translation for cross-cultural research. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1(3), 185-216.
- Brockner, J. and Higgins, E.T. (2001). Regulatory focus theory: Implications for the study of emotions at work. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 86(1), 35-66.

- Brown, G. and Maxwell, G. (2002). Customer service in UK call centres: organizational perspectives and employee perceptions. *Journal of Retailing and Customer Services*, 9(6), 309-316.
- Buck, R. (1984). *The communication of emotion*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Buck, R. and Georgson, M. (1997). Consumer emotion space: An investigation of semantic space and context effects in self-reported emotion elicitation. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 24, 431-437.
- Budhwar, P.S., Varma, A., Malhotra, N. and Mukherjee, A. (2009). Insights into the call centre industry: can internal marketing help tackle high employee turnover. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 23(5), 351-362.
- Budwahr, P.S., Varma, A., Singh, V. and Dhar, R. (2006). HRM systems of Indian call centres: an exploratory study. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17(5), 881-897.
- Burgers, A. de Ruyter, K., Keen, C. and Streukens, S. (2000). Customer expectation dimensions of voice-to-voice service encounters: a scale-development study. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 11(2), 142-161.
- Burns, D.J. and Neisner, L. (2006). Customer satisfaction in a retail setting: the contribution of emotion. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 34(1), 49-66.
- Brunswik, E. (1955). Representative design and probabilistic theory in a functional psychology. *Psychological Review*, 62, 193-217.
- Byrne, B.M. (2001). *Structural equation modelling with AMOS: basic concepts, applications, and programming*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Cacioppo, J. T. and Berntson, G. G. (1999). The affect system architecture and operating characteristics. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 8(5), 133-137.
- Calder, B.J. (1977). Focus group and the nature of qualitative marketing research. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 14(3), 353-364.
- Callaghan, G. and Thompson, P. (2002). We recruit 'Attitude': the selection and shaping of routine call centre labour. *Journal of Management Studies*, 39(2), 233-254.
- Campbell, C. and Martinko, M. (1998). An integrative attributional perspective of empowerment and learned helplessness: A multimethod field study. *Journal of Management*, 24(2), 173-200.
- Capraro, A.J., Broniarczyk, S. and Srivastava, R.K. (2003). Factors influencing the likelihood of customer defection: the role of consumer knowledge. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31(2), 164-175.
- Carson, D., Gilmore, A., Perry, C. and Gronhaug, K. (2001). *Qualitative marketing research*: Sage.
- Caruana, A. (2002). Service loyalty: the effects of service quality and the mediating role of customer satisfaction. *European Journal of Marketing*, 36(7/8), 811-828.



- Carver, C. S. (2004). Negative affects deriving from the behavioral approach system. *Emotion*, 4(1), 3–22.
- Catalano, R., Novaco, R., and McConnell, W. (1997). A model of the net effect of job loss on violence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(6), 1440–1447.
- Chandrashekar, M., Rotte, K., Tax, S. S. and Grewal, R. (2007). Satisfaction strength and customer loyalty. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(1), 153-163.
- Chebat, J-C and Slusarczyk, W. (2005). How emotions mediate the effects of perceived justice on loyalty in service recovery situations: an empirical study. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(5), 664-673.
- Chitturi, R., Raghunathan, R. and Mahajan, V. (2008). Delight by design: The role of hedonic versus utilitarian benefits. *Journal of Marketing*, 72 (3), 48–63.
- Choi, B.J. and Kim, H.S. (2013). The impact of outcome quality, interaction quality, and peer-to-peer quality on customer satisfaction with a hospital service. *Managing Service Quality*, 23(3), 188-204.
- Chou, C. P. and Bentler, P. M. (1995). Estimates and tests in structural equation modeling. In R. H. Hoyle (Ed.), *Structural equation modeling: Concepts, issues, and applications* (pp. 37-55). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Churchill, Jr., G.A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16, 64-73.
- Churchill, Jr., G.A. and Iacobucci, D. (2002). *Marketing Research- Methodological Foundations*, Harcourt, Fort Worth, TX.
- Cleveland, B. and Mayben, J. (1997). *Call Center Management on Fast Forward*. Call Center Press, Annapolis, MD.
- Clore, G.L. and Ortony, A. (2000). Cognition in emotion: always, sometimes, or never?. In: Lane, RD.; Nadel, L., editors. *Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotion*. London Univ. Press; London, p. 24-61.
- Clore G.L., Schwartz, N. and Conway, M. (1994). Affective causes and consequences of social information processing. In R Wyer & T. Srull (Eds.), *Handbook of social cognition* (2nd ed., pp.323-417). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Colgate, M. and Stewart, K. (1998). The challenge of relationships in services: a New Zealand study. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 9(5), 454-468.
- Cooil, B., Keiningham, T.L., Aksoy, L. and Hsu, M. (2007). A longitudinal analysis of customer satisfaction and share of wallet: Investigating the moderating effect of customer characteristics. *Journal of Marketing*, 71(1), 67-83.
- Cooper, J. M. (1996). An aristotelian theory of the emotions. *Essays on Aristotle's rhetoric*: 238-257.
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2008). *Basic of Qualitative Research*. 3rd Ed. Sage Publications.

- Corley, K.G. and Gioia, D.A. (2004). Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49, 173-208.
- Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). Designing and conducting mixed methods research (2<sup>nd</sup> eds.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J.W., Plano Clark, V.L., Gutmann, M. and Hanson, W. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp.209-240). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cronin Jr, J. J., Brady, M. K. and Hult, G. T. M. (2000). Assessing the effects of quality, value, and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioral intentions in service environments. *Journal of Retailing*, 76(2), 193-218.
- Crosby, L.A., Evans, K.R. and Cowles, D (1990). Relationship quality in services selling: an interpersonal influence perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(3), 68-81.
- Crosby, L.A., Johnson, S.L. and Quinn, R.T. (2002). Is survey research dead?. *Marketing Management*, 11(3), 24-29.
- Cunningham, R.M. (1956). Brand loyalty – what, where, how much. *Harvard Business Review*, 39 (November-December), 116-138.
- Cunningham, R.M. (1961). Customer loyalty to store and brand. *Harvard Business Review*, 39 (November-December), 127-137.
- Czepiel, J.A. (1990). Service encounters and service relationships: Implications for research. *Journal of Business Research*, 20(1), 13-21.
- Davis, D.F., Golicic, S.L., and Boerstler, C.N. (2011). Benefits and challenges of conducting multiple methods research in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(3), 467-479.
- Day, G.S. (1969). A two dimensional concept of brand loyalty. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 9(3), 29-36.
- De Dreu, C. K., Baas, M. and Nijstad, B. A. (2008). Hedonic tone and activation level in the mood-creativity link: toward a dual pathway to creativity model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94(5), 739-756.
- De Matos, C.A., Henrique, J.L. and de Rosa, F. (2009). The different roles of switching costs on the satisfaction-loyalty relationship. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 27(7), 506-523.
- DeWitt, T., Nguyen, D.T. and Marshall, R. (2008). Exploring customer loyalty following service recovery: The mediating effects of trust and emotions. *Journal of Service Research*, 10(3), 269-281.
- Del Río-Lanza, A. B., Vázquez-Casielles, R. and Díaz-Martín, A. (2009). Satisfaction with service recovery: Perceived justice and emotional responses. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(8), 775-781.
- Dean, A.M. (2002). Service quality in call centres: implications for customer loyalty. *Managing Service Quality*, 12(6), 414-423.

- Dean, A.M. (2004). Rethinking customer expectations of service quality: are call centers different?. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 18(1), 60-77.
- Dean, A.M. (2007). The impact of the customer orientation of call center employees on customers' affective commitment and loyalty. *Journal of Service Research*, 10(2), 161-173.
- Deery, S.J., Iverson, R.D. and Walsh, J.T. (2010). Toward a better understanding of psychological contract breach: A study of customer service employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(1), 166-175.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act in sociology: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, Rutgers.
- Denzin, N. K. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2), 80-88.
- Dewey, John. (1970). *The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy*. Pp. 3-69 in Creative Intelligence. New York: Octagon.
- Dhar, R. and Wertenbroch, K. (2000). Consumer choice between hedonic and utilitarian goods. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 37(1), 60-71.
- Dick, A.S. and Basu, K. (1994). Customer loyalty: Toward an integrated conceptual framework. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 22(2), 99-113.
- Diener, E. and Larsen, R. J. (1984). Temporal stability and cross-situational consistency of affective, behavioral, and cognitive responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 47(4), 871-883.
- Dillman, D.A. (1978). *Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method*. New York: Wiley Interscience.
- Dillman, D.A. (1991). The design and administration of mail surveys. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 17, 225-249.
- Dillman, D.A. (2007). *Mail and Internet surveys: the tailored design method* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Hoboken: NJ: Wiley.
- Dollard, J., Doob, L., Miller, N., Mowrer, O. H. and Sears, R. R. (1939). *Frustration and aggression*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Doyle, J.C. and Carolan, M.D. (1998). Calling all trainers. *Training and Development*, 52(1), 58-67.
- Duhachek, A. (2005). Coping: A multidimensional, hierarchical framework of responses to stressful consumption episodes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(1), 41-53.
- Dubé, L. and Menon, K. (2000). Multiple roles of consumption emotions in post-purchase satisfaction with extended service transactions. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 11(3), 287-298.
- Dubé, L. and Morgan, M.S. (1998). Capturing the dynamics of in-process consumption emotions and satisfaction in extended service transactions. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 15(4), 309-320.

- Dubé, L. and Schmitt, B. H. (1991). The processing of emotional and cognitive aspects of product usage in satisfaction judgments. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 18(1), 52-56.
- Einhorn, H.J. and Robin M. H. (1981). Behavioral decision theory: Processes of judgment and choice. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 32(1), 53-88.
- Ekman, P. (1972). Universals and cultural differences in facial expressions of emotion. In J. Cole (Ed.), *Nebraska symposium on motivation*, 1971 (Vol. 19, pp. 207-282). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Elfenbein, H. A. (2007). Emotion in Organizations: A review and theoretical integration. *Academy of Management Annals*, 1(1), 315-386.
- Evanschitzky, H. and Wunderlich, M. (2006). An examination of moderator effects in the four-stage loyalty model. *Journal of Service Research*, 8(4), 330-345.
- Everitt, B. S. (1975). Multivariate analysis: The need for data, and other problems. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 126, 237-240.
- Fan, X., Thompson, B. and Wang, L. (1999). Effects of sample size, estimation method, and model specification on structural equation modeling fit indexes. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6(1), 56-83.
- Feinberg, R.A., Hokama, L., Kadam, R. and Kim, I. (2002). Operational determinants of caller satisfaction in the banking/financial services call center. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 20(4), 174-180.
- Feinberg, R.A., Kim, I., Hokama, L., de Ruyter K. and Keen, C. (2000). Operational determinants of caller satisfaction in the call center. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 11(2), 131-141.
- Fern, E.F. (2001). *Advanced Focus Group Research*. Sage. Thousand Oaks: C.A.
- Fink, A. (1995). *The Survey Handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Folkes, V., Koletsky, S. and Graham, J.L. (1987). A field study of causal inferences and consumer reaction: the view from the airport. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(4), 534-549.
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.
- Fournier, S. and Mick, D.G. (1999). Rediscovering satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(4), 5-23.
- Frenkel, S.J., Tam, M., Korczynski, M. And Shire, K. (1998). Beyond bureaucracy? Work organization in call centres. *The International Journal of Human Resources Management*, 9(6), 975-979.
- Fridlund, A. J. (1994). *Human facial expression: An evolutionary view*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Frijda, N. H. (1968). Recognition of emotion. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. New York: Academic Press.

- Frijda, N. H. (1986). *The emotions*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Frijda, N. H. (1988). The laws of emotion. *American Psychologist*, 43(5), 349-358.
- Frijda, N. H. (2006). *The Laws of Emotion*. Erlbaum; Mahwah, NJ.
- Frijda, N. H. and Mesquita, B. (1994). The social roles and functions of emotions. In S. Kitayama, H. R. Markus (Eds.), *Emotion and culture* (pp. 51-87). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Fussell, S. R. (2002). The verbal communication of emotions; interdisciplinary perspectives. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum associates publishers.
- Garbarino, E. and Johnson, M. S. (2001). Effect of consumer goals on attribute weighting, overall satisfaction, and product usage. *Psychology & Marketing*, 18(9), 929-949.
- Garnett, O., Mandelbaum, A. and Reiman, M. (2002). Designing a call center with impatient customers. *Manufacturing and Service Operations Management*, 4(3), 208-227.
- Geisinger, K.F. (2003). Testing and assessment in cross-cultural psychology. In J.R. Graham, J.A. Naglieri and I.B. Weiner (Eds.), *Handbook of Psychology*, 10, Assessment Psychology (pp.95-118). Jon Wiley and Sons, Hoboken.
- Gelbrich, K. (2010). Anger, frustration, and helplessness after service failure: coping strategies and effective informational support. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38(5), 567-585.
- Gibson, D.E. and Callister, R.R. (2010). Anger in Organizations: Review and Integration. *Journal of Management*, 36(1), 66-93.
- Giebelhausen, M., Robinson, S.J., Sirianni, N.J. and Brady, M.K. (2014). Touch versus tech: When technology functions as a barrier or a benefit to service encounters. *Journal of Marketing*, 78, 113-124.
- Giese, J.L. and Cote, J.A. (2000). Defining customer satisfaction. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 20(1), Retrieved 06/12/2011, 2011, from <http://www.amsreview.org/articles/giese01-2000.pdf>
- Gilbert A. and Churchill J.R. (1991). *Marketing Research – Methodological Foundations*. 5th Edition. The Dryden Press International Edition.
- Gilmore, A. (2001). Call centre management: is service quality a priority?. *Managing Service Quality*, 11(3), 153-159.
- Gonçalves, H.M. and Sampaio, P. (2012). The customer satisfaction-loyalty relationship: Reassessing customer and relational characteristics moderating effects. *Management Decision*. 50(9), 1509-1526.
- Gracia, E., Bakker, A.B. and Grau, R.M. (2011). Positive emotions: The connection between customer quality evaluations and loyalty. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 52(4), 458– 465.
- Grandey, A. A., Dickter, D. N. and Sin, H.-P. (2004). The customer is not always right: customer aggression and emotion regulation of service employees. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 397-418.

- Greenbaum, T.L. (2000). *Moderating Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Group Facilitation*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, C.A.
- Greene, J.C. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Greene, J.C., Caracelli, V.J., and Graham, W.F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255-274.
- Gremler, D.D. and Brown, S.W. (1996). *Service loyalty: its nature, importance and implications*. In Edvardsson, B., Brown, S.W., Johnston, R. and Scheuing, E.E. (Eds.), *Proceedings American Marketing Association*, pp.171-180.
- Gross, J. J. (1998a). Antecedent-and response-focused emotion regulation: divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(1), 224-237.
- Gross, J. J. (1998b). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology*, 23, 271-299.
- Gross, J. J. (2001). Emotion regulation in adulthood: Timing is everything. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10(6), 214-219.
- Guchait, P. and Namasivayam, K. (2012). Customer creation of service products: role of frustration in customer evaluations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 26(3), 216-224.
- Hair, Jr., J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. and Anderson, R.E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis, a global perspective*. Pearson.
- Haj-Salem, N. and Chebat J-C. (2014). The double-edged sword: The positive and negative effects of switching costs on customer exit and revenge. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(6), 1106-1113.
- Halliden, B. and Monks, K. (2005). Employee-centred management in a call centre. *Personal Review*, 34(3), 370-383.
- Han, S., Lerner, J.S. and Keltner, D. (2007). Feelings and consumer decision making: The appraisal-tendency framework. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 17(3), 158-168.
- Harrison, R. L. and Reilly, T. M. (2011). Mixed methods designs in marketing research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 14(1), 7-26.
- Harrison-Walker, L.J. (2012). The role of cause and affect in service failure. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 26(2), 115-123.
- Havlena, W.J., Holbrook, M.B. and Lehmann, D.R. (1989). Assessing the validity of emotional typologies. *Psychology & Marketing*, 6(2), 97-112.
- Hawcroft, J.B. and Beckett, A. (1993). Changes in UK bank branch networks: a customer perspective. *The Service Industries Journal*, 13(4), 267-288.
- Heitmann, M., Lehmann, D. R. and Herrmann, A. (2007). Choice goal attainment and decision and consumption satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(2), 234-250.

- Hellen, K. and Saaksjärvi, M. (2011). Happiness as predictor of service quality and commitment for utilitarian and hedonic services. *Psychology & Marketing*, 28(9), 934-957.
- Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist*, 52(12), 1280–1300.
- Higgins, E. T. (2001). Promotion and prevention experiences: Relating emotions to nonemotional motivational states. In J. P. Forgas (Ed.), *Handbook of affect and social cognition* (pp. 186–211). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Higgins, E. T. (2006). Value from hedonic experience and engagement. *Psychological Review*, 113(3), 439–460.
- Hirschman, E. C. and Holbrook, M. B. (1982). Hedonic consumption: Emerging concepts, methods and propositions. *Journal of Marketing*, 46(3), 92-101.
- Hjorland, B. (2005). Empiricism, rationalism and positivism in library and information science. *Journal of Documentation*, 61(1), 130-155.
- Hocutt, M.A. (1998). Relationship dissolution model: antecedents of relationship commitment and the likelihood of dissolving a relationship. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 9(2), 189-200.
- Holbrook, M.B. and Batra, R. (1987). Assessing the role of emotions as mediators of consumer responses to advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(3), 404-419.
- Holbrook, M.B. and Westwood, R.A. (1989). *The role of emotion in advertising revisited: testing a typology of emotional responses*. In P. Cafferata and A Tybout (Eds.), *Cognitive and affective responses to advertising* (pp.353-371). MA: Lexington Books.
- Holsti, O.R. (1968). *Content analysis*. In G. Lindzey and E Aaronson (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Holtzman, W.H. (1968). Cross-cultural studies in psychology. *International Journal of Psychology*, 3(2), 83-91.
- Homburg, C. and Giering, A (2001). Personal characteristics as moderators of the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty – an empirical investigation. *Psychology & Marketing*, 18(1), 43-66.
- Homburg, C., Koschate, N. and Hoyer, W. D. (2006). The role of cognition and affect in the formation of customer satisfaction: A Dynamic Perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (3), 21-31.
- Hosany, S. and Prayag, G. (2013). Patterns of tourists' emotional responses, satisfaction, and intention to recommend. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(6), 730-737.
- Houlihan, M. (2002). Tension and variation in call centre management strategy. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 12(4), 67-85.
- Hudson, L.A. and Ozanne, J.L. (1988). Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(4), 508-521.



- Hudson, S., Gonzalez, H. and Rychalski, A. (2014). An odyssey in frustration: The customer call centre experience. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, under review.
- Hui, M.K. and Tse, D.K. (1996). What to tell consumers in waits of different lengths: an integrative model of service evaluation. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(2), 81-90.
- Hutchinson, S., Purcell, J. and Kinnie, N. (2000). Evolving high commitment management and the experience of the RAC call centre. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 10(1), 63-78.
- Idson, L.C., Liberman, N. and Higgins, E.T. (2000). Distinguishing gains from nonlosses and losses from nongains: A regulatory focus perspective on hedonic intensity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 36, 252-274.
- Izard, C.E. (1977). *Human Emotions*. New York, Plenum.
- Jack, E.P., Bedics, T.A. and McCary, C.E. (2006). Operational challenges in the call center industry: a case study and resource-based framework. *Managing Service Quality*, 16(5), 477-500.
- Jaiswal, A.K. (2008). Customer satisfaction and service quality measurement in Indian call centres. *Managing Service Quality*, 18(4), 405-416.
- Jamel, A. and Naser, K. (2002). Customer satisfaction and retail banking: an assessment of some of the key antecedents of customer satisfaction in retail banking. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 20(4/5), 146-160.
- Jarvis, C.B., Mackenzie, S.B. and Podsakoff, P.M. (2003). A critical review of construct indicators and measurement model misspecification in marketing and consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30(2), 199-218.
- Jarvis, C.B., Mackenzie, S.B. and Podsakoff, P.M. (2012). The negative consequences of measurement model misspecification: a response to Aguirre-Urreta and Marakas. *MIS Quarterly*, 36(1), 139-146.
- Jiang, Y. and Wang, C.L. (2006). The impact of affect on service quality and satisfaction: the moderation of service contexts. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 20(4), 211-218.
- Johnson, E.J. and Tversky, A. (1983). Affect, generalization, and the perception of risk. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45(1), 20-31.
- Johnson, D.R. and Creech, J.C. (1983). Ordinal measures in multiple indicator models: A simulation study of categorization error. *American Sociological Review*, 48(3), 398-407.
- Jorgensen, B.K. (1996). Components of consumer reaction to company-related mishaps: A structural equation model approach. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 23, 346-351.
- Kahneman, D. and Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect Theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, 47(2), 263-291.
- Kalamas, M., LaRoche, M. and Makdessian, L. (2008). Reaching the boiling point: consumers' negative affective reactions to firm-attributed service failures. *Journal of Business Research*, 61(8), 813-824.

- Kamakura, W.A., Mittal, V., de Rose, F. and Mazzon, J.A. (2003). Assessing the service-profit chain'. *Marketing Science*, 21(3), 294-317.
- Keiningham, T.L., Aksoy, L., Andreassen, T.W., Cooil, B. and Wahren, B.J. (2006). Call centre satisfaction and customer retention in a co-branded service context. *Managing Service Quality*, 16(3), 269-289.
- Keltner, D. and Haidt, J. (1999). Social functions of emotions at four levels of analysis. *Cognition and Emotion*, 13(5), 505-521.
- Kiesler, S. and Sproull, L.S. (1986). Response effects in the electronic survey. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50(3), 402-413.
- Kinnie, N., Hutchinson, S. and Purcell, J. (2000). Fun and surveillance: the paradox of high commitment in management in call centers. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(5), 967-985.
- Klaus, P. and Maklan, S. (2011). Bridging the gap for destination extreme sports: A model of sports tourism customer experience. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27(13/14), 1341-1365.
- Kline, R. B. (2010). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Klinger, E. (1975). Consequences of commitment to and disengagement from incentives. *Psychological Review*, 82(1), 1-25.
- Koenig-Lewis, N. and Palmer, A. (2008). Experiential values over time -- a comparison of measures of satisfaction and emotion. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 24(1/2), 69-85.
- Kong R. and Mayo, M.C. (1993). Measuring service quality in the business-to-business context. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 8(2), 5-15.
- Kovecses, Z. (2000). *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- Krampf, R., Ueltschy, L. and d'Amico, M. (2003). The contribution of emotion to consumer satisfaction in the service setting. *Marketing Management Journal*, 13(1), 32-52.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park.
- Krueger, R.A. and Casey, M.A. (2000). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, C.A.
- Kumar, V., Pozza, I.D. and Ganesh, J. (2013). Revising the satisfaction-loyalty relationship: Empirical generalizations and directions for future research. *Journal of Retailing*, 89(3), 246-262.
- Labroo, A.A. and Rucker, D. D. (2010). The orientation-matching hypothesis: an emotion-specificity approach to affect regulation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 47(5), 955-966.

- Laros, F. J. and Steenkamp, J.-B. E. (2005). Emotions in consumer behavior: a hierarchical approach. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(10), 1437-1445.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Progress on a cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion. *American Psychologist*, 46(8), 819-834.
- Lazarus, R. S. and Folkman, S. (1984). Stress. *Appraisal and Coping*, New York.
- Lee, J., Lee, J. and Feick, L. (2001). The impact of switching costs on the customer satisfaction-loyalty link: mobile phone service in France. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(1), 35-48.
- Lemminck, J. and Mattsson, J. (2002). Employee behavior, feelings of warmth and customer perception in service encounters. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 30(1), 18-34.
- Lemke, F., Clark, M. and Wilsom, J. (2011). Customer experience quality: an exploration in business and consumer contexts using repertory grid technique. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(6), 846-869.
- Lerner, J.S. and Keltner, D. (2000). Beyond valence: Toward a model of emotion-specific influences on judgment and choice. *Cognition and Emotion*, 14(4), 473-493.
- Lerner, J.S. and Keltner, D. (2001). Fear, anger, and risk. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 81(1), 146-159.
- Liljander, V. and Mattsson, J. (2002). Impact of customer preconsumption mood on the evaluation of employee behavior in service encounters. *Psychology & Marketing*, 19(10), 837-860.
- Liljander, V. and Strandvik, T. (1997). Emotions in service satisfaction. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 8(2), 148-169.
- Loureiro, S.M.C. and Roschk, H. (2014). Differential effects of atmospheric cues on emotions and loyalty intention with respect to age under online/offline environment. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 21(2), 211-219.
- Love, T. (2002). Multiple theoretical perspectives in the long thesis PhD: A foundation problem in PhD education. *HERDSA*, 409-416.
- Lywood, J., Stone, M. and Ekinici, Y. (2009). Customer experiences and profitability: An application of the empathy rating index (ERIC) in UK call centers. *Database Marketing and Customer Strategy Management*, 16(3), 207-214.
- Ma, Z. and Dubé, L. (2011). Process and outcome interdependency in frontline service encounters. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(3), 83-98.
- Machleit, K. and Mantel, S. (2001). Emotional response and shopping satisfaction: moderating effects of shopper attributions. *Journal of Business Research*, 54(2), 97-106.
- Malhotra, N.K. (2007). *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, Pearson Education International, 5th Edition.

- Malhotra, N.K. and McCort, D. (2001). A cross-cultural comparison of behavioral intentions models: theoretical considerations and an empirical investigation. *International Marketing Review*, 18(3), 235-269.
- Malhotra, N. and Mukherjee, A. (2004). The relative influence of organizational commitment and job satisfaction on service quality of customer-contact employees in banking call centres. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 18(3), 162-174.
- Malhotra, N, Budhwar, P. and Prowse, P. (2007). Linking rewards to commitment: an empirical investigation of four UK call centres. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(12), 2095-2127.
- Mandelbaum, A. and Momcilovic, P. (2008). Queues with many servers: the virtual waiting-time process in the QED regime. *Mathematics of Operations Research*, 33(3), 581-586.
- Mano, H. and Oliver, R.L. (1993). Assessing the dimensionality and structure of the consumption experience: Evaluation, feeling, and satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(3), 451-466.
- Marcus-Newhall, A., Pedersen, W.C., Carlson, M. and Miller, N. (2000). Displaced aggression is alive and well: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 78(4), 670-689.
- Marsh, H.W., Balla, J.R. and McDonald, R.P. (1988). Goodness-of-fit indexes in confirmatory factor analysis: The effect of sample size. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3), 391-410.
- Martin, L.L., Ward, D.W., Achee, J.W. and Wyer, R.S. Jr. (1993). Mood as input: People have to interpret the motivational implications of their moods. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 64(3), 317-326.
- Martinko, M. J., and Gardner, W. L. (1982). Learned helplessness: An alternative explanation for performance deficits. *Academy of Management Review*, 7(2), 195–204.
- Mattson, J., Lemmink, J. and McColl, R. (2004). The effect of verbalized emotions on loyalty in written complaints. *Total Quality Management*, 15(7), 941-958.
- Maute, M.F. and Dubé, L. (1999). Patterns of emotional responses and behavioral consequences of dissatisfaction. *Applied Psychology*, 48(3), 349-366.
- McDonald, W.J. (1993). Focus group research dynamics and reporting: an examination of research objectives and moderator influences. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing*, 21(2), 161-168.
- Mehrabian, A. and de Wetter, R. (1987). Experimental test of an emotion-based approach to fitting brand names to products. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 72(1), 125-130.
- Mehrabian, A. and Russell, J. A. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology*: the MIT Press.
- Mesquita B. and Kawasaka M. (2002). Different emotional lives. *Cognition and Emotion*. 16, 127–141.

- Miciak, A. and Desmarais, M. (2001). Benchmarking service quality performance at business-to-business and business-to-consumer call centers. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 16(5), 340-353.
- Mikulincer, M. (1988). Reactance and helplessness following exposure to unsolvable problems: The effects of attributional style. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(4), 679-686.
- Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd ed., Newbury Park, CA, Sage Publications.
- Miniero, G., Rurale, A. and Addis, M. (2014). Effects of arousal, dominance, and their interaction on pleasure in a cultural environment. *Psychology & Marketing*, 31(8), 628-634.
- Mittal, V. and Kamakura, W.A. (2001). Satisfaction, repurchase intent, and repurchase behavior: Investigating the moderating effect of customer characteristics. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38(1), 131-142.
- Montoya-Weiss, M. M., Voss, G. B. and Grewal, D. (2003). Determinants of online channel use and overall satisfaction with a relational, multichannel service provider. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31(4), 448-458.
- Morgan, D.L. and Krueger, R.A. (1993). *When to Use Focus Groups and Why*, Sage, London.
- Moshavi, D. and Terborg, J.R. (2002). The job satisfaction and performance of contingent and regular customer service representatives, a human capital perspective. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 13(4), 333-347.
- Mukherjee, A. and Malhotra, N. (2006). Does role clarity explain employee-perceived service quality?: A study of antecedents and consequences in call centres. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 17(5), 444-473.
- Mukherjee, A. and Malhotra, N. (2009). Call centre services: the good, the bad, and the ugly. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 23(5), 275-278.
- Myers, J. H. (1991). Measuring customer satisfaction: Is meeting expectations enough? *Marketing Research*, 3(4), 35-43.
- Nunnally, J.C. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Nunnally, J. C. and Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric Theory* (3rd ed.), New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Nyer, P.U. (1997). A study of the relationships between cognitive appraisals and consumption emotions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(4), 296-304.
- Okada, E.M. (2005). Justification effects on consumer choice of hedonic and utilitarian goods. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 42(1), 43-53.
- Oliva, T.A., Oliver, R.L. and MacMillan, I.C. (1992). A catastrophe model for developing service satisfaction strategies. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(3), 83-95.

- Oliver, R.L. (1980). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17(4), 460-469.
- Oliver, R.L. (1981). Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction process in retail settings. *Journal of Retailing*, 57(3), 25-48.
- Oliver, R.L. (1993). Cognitive, affective and attribute bases of the satisfaction response. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(3), 418-430.
- Oliver, R.L. (1997). *Satisfaction: A behavioral perspective on the consumer*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- Oliver, R. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty?. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(4), 33-44.
- Oliver, R.L. and Swan, J.E. (1989). Equity and disconfirmation perceptions as influences on merchant and product satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(3), 372-383.
- Olsen, S.O. (2002). Comparative evaluation and the relationship between quality, satisfaction, and repurchase loyalty. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30(3), 240-249.
- Olsen, S.O., Wilcox, J. and Olsson, U. (2005). Consequences of ambivalence on satisfaction and loyalty. *Psychology & Marketing*, 22(3), 247-269.
- Olshavsky, R.W. and Spreng, R.A. (1989). A 'desires as standard' model of consumer satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 2, 49-54.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Teddlie, C. (2003). A framework for analyzing data in mixed methods research. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, 351-383.
- Orsingher, C. and Marzocchi, G. L. (2003). Hierarchical representation of satisfactory consumer service experience. *International Journal of Service Industries Management*, 14(2), 200-216.
- Orsingher, C., Marzocchi, G. L and Valentini, S. (2011). Consumer (goal) satisfaction: A means-ends chain approach. *Psychology & Marketing*, 28(7), 730-748.
- Ortega, D.M. and Richey, C.A. (1998). Methodological issues in social work research with depressed women of color. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 23(3/4), 47-70.
- Ortony, A. and Turner, T.J. (1990). What's basic about basic emotions?. *Psychological Review*, 97(3), 315-331.
- Palmer, A. and Koenig-Lewis, N. (2010). Primary and secondary effects of emotions on behavioural intention of theatre clients. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 26(13/14), 1201-1217.
- Parasuraman, A. (1991). *Marketing Research*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison- Wesley.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A. and Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12-40.

- Patterson, P.G. and Spreng, R.A. (1997). Modeling the relationship between perceived value, satisfaction and repurchase intentions in a business-to-business service context: an empirical examination. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 8(5), 414-434.
- Paulin, M., Ferguson, R.J. and Payaud, M. (2000). Business effectiveness and professional service personal – relational or transactional managers?. *European Journal of Marketing*, 34(3/4), 453-471.
- Peevers G., McInnes, F., Morton, H., Matthews, A. and Jack, M.A. (2009). The mediating effects of brand music and waiting time updates on customers' satisfaction with a telephone service when put on-hold. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 27(3), 202-217.
- Peterson, R. (1994). A meta-analysis of Cronbach's coefficient alpha. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23(4), 278-281.
- Phillips, D.M. and Baumgartner, H. (2002). The role of consumption emotions in the satisfaction response. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 12(3), 243–252.
- Picon, A., Castro, I. and Roldan, J.L. (2014). The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty: A mediator analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 67, 746-751.
- Prince, M. and Davies, M. (2001). Moderator teams: An extension to focus group methodology. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 4(4), 207-216.
- Pullman, M. E. and Gross, M. A. (2004). Ability of experience design elements to elicit emotions and loyalty behaviors. *Decision Sciences*, 35(3), 551-578.
- Ranganathan, S.K., Madupu, V., Sen, S. and Brooks, J.R. (2013). Affective and cognitive antecedents of customer loyalty towards e-mail service providers. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 27(3), 195–206.
- Rappaport, D.M. (1996). Key role of integration in call centers. *Business Communications Review*, 26(7), 44-48.
- Reichheld, F. (1996). *The Loyalty Effect*, Boston: Harvard Lexington, MA: Lexington Books. Business School Press.
- Reichheld, F.F. (2003). The One Number You Need to Grow. *Harvard Business Review*, December 2003, 46-54.
- Richins, M. L. (1997). Measuring emotions in the consumption experience. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(2), 127-146.
- Richins, M.L. (2013). When wanting is better than having: Materialism, transformation expectations, and product-evoked emotions in the purchase process. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(1), 1-18.
- Robinson, G. and Morley, C. (2006). Call centre management: responsibilities and performance. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 17(3), 284-300.
- Roseman, I. J. (1984). *Cognitive determinants of emotions: A structural theory*, Berkeley, CA: Sage.



- Rossiter, J. and Bellman, S. (2012). Emotional branding pays off. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 52(3), 291-296.
- Roussel, P., Durrieu, F., Campoy, E. and El Akremi, A. (2002). *Méthodes d'équations structurelles: recherche et applications en gestion*. Ed. Economica. Paris.
- Rundle-Thiele, S. and Mackay, M. (2001). Assessing the performance of brand loyalty measure. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(7), 529-546.
- Russell, B. (2008). Call centres: A decade of research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 10(3), 195-219.
- Russell, J. A. (1980). A circumplex model of affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(6), 1161-1178.
- Russell, J. A. (2009). Emotion, core affect, and psychological construction. *Cognition and Emotion*, 23(7), 1259-1283.
- Rust, R. T. and Chung, T.S.(2006). Marketing models of service and relationships. *Marketing Science*, 25(6), 560-580.
- Rust, R. T. and Oliver, R. L. (1994). *Service quality: New directions in theory and practice*: Sage Publications California.
- Rust, R., Inman, J.J., Jia, J. and Zahorik, A. (1999). What you don't know about customer-perceived quality: The role of customer expectation distributions. *Marketing Science*, 18 (1), 77-92.
- Rust, R.T., Lemon, K.N. and Zeithaml, V.A. (2004). Return on marketing: Using customer equity to focus marketing strategy. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(1), 109-127.
- Rust, R.T., Zahorik, A.J., Keiningham, T.L. (1995). Return on quality (ROQ): Making service quality financially accountable. *Journal of Marketing*, 59(2), 58-70.
- Ruth, J.A., Brunel, F.F. and Otnes, C.C. (2002). Linking thoughts to feelings: investigating cognitive appraisals and consumption emotions in a mixed-emotions context. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30(1), 44-58.
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Eds. Sage.
- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2003). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 3rd Edition, Prentice Hall.
- Schaefer, D. R. and Dillman. D.A. (1998). Development of a standard email methodology: Results of an experiment. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 62(3), 378-390.
- Schaffer, B.S. and Riordan, C.M. (2003). A review of cross-cultural methodologies for organizational research: A best- practices approach. *Organizational Research Methods*, 6(2), 169-215.
- Scherer, K. R. (1982). Emotion as process: Function, origin and regulation. *Social Science Information*, 21(4/5), 555-570.
- Scherer. K. (1984). Emotion as a multicomponent process: A model and some crosscultural data. In P. Shaver (Ed.), *Review of Personality and Social Psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 37-63). Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

- Scherer, K. R. (1995). In defense of a nomothetic approach to studying emotion-antecedent appraisal. *Psychological Inquiry*, 6(3), 241-248.
- Schermelleh-Engel, K., Moosbrugger, H. and Müller, H. (2003). Evaluating the fit of structural equation models: Tests of significance and descriptive goodness-of-fit measures. *Methods of Psychological Research Online*, 8(2), 23-74.
- Schoefer, K. (2008). The role of cognition and affect in the formation of customer satisfaction judgements concerning service recovery encounters. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 7(3), 210-221.
- Schumacker, R. E. and Lomax, R. G. (2004). *A beginner's guide to structural equation model*. (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah.
- Schwartz, N. (1990). Feelings as information: Informational and motivational functions of affective states. In E.T. Higgins & R.M. Sorrentino (Eds.), *The handbook of motivation and cognition: Foundations of social behavior* (Vol.2, pp.527-561). New York: Guilford Press.
- Seiders, K., Voss, G.B., Grewal, D. and Godfrey, A.L. (2005). Do satisfied customers buy more? Examining moderating influences in a retailing context'. *Journal of Marketing*, 69(4), 26-43.
- Sergeant, A. and Frenkel, S. (2000). When do customer contact employees satisfy customers?. *Journal of Service Research*, 3(1), 18-34.
- Shankar, V., Smith, A.K. and Rangaswamy, A. (2003). Customer satisfaction and loyalty in online and offline environments. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 20(2), 153-175.
- Sharma, P., Chen, I.S.N. and Luk, S.T.K. (2012). Gender and age as moderators in the service evaluation process. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 26(2), 102-114.
- Sharma, S. Durand, R.M., Gur-Arie, O. (1981). Identification and analysis of moderator variables. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(3), 291-300.
- Shaver, P., Schwartz, J., Kirson, D. and O'Connor, C. (1987). Emotion knowledge: Further exploration of a prototype approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52(6), 1061-1086.
- Sheehan, K.B. (2001). E-mail survey response rates: a review. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 6(2). Retrieved 07/12/2012, 2012, from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol6/issue2/sheehan.html>.
- Smith, A. M. (2006). A cross-cultural perspective on the role of emotion in negative service encounters. *The Service Industries Journal*, 26(7), 709-726.
- Smith, C. A. and Ellsworth, P. C. (1985). Patterns of cognitive appraisal in emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48(4), 813-838.
- Smith, C. and Lazarus, R. (1993). Appraisal components, core relational themes, and the emotions. *Cognition and Emotion*, 7(3/4), 233-269.
- Smith, A. K., Bolton, R. N. and Wagner, J. (1999). A model of customer satisfaction with service encounters involving failure and recovery. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36(3), 356-372.

- Spangenberg, E. R., Voss, K. E. and Crowley, A. E. (1997). Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of attitude: A generally applicable scale. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 24(1), 235-241.
- Spector, P. E. (1975). Relationships of organizational frustration with reported behavioral reactions of employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, 635-637.
- Spector, P. E. (1978). Organizational frustration: A model and review of the literature. *Personnel Psychology*, 31, 815-829.
- Spreng, R.A., MacKenzie, S.B. and Olshavsky, R.W. (1996). A reexamination of the determinants of consumer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(3), 15-32.
- Stauss, B. and Mang, P. (1999). Culture shocks in inter-cultural service encounters?. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 13(4/5), 329-346.
- Stauss, B. and Neuhaus, P. (1997). The qualitative satisfaction model. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 8(3), 236-249.
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). Qualitative analysis for social scientists. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strebel, J., O'Donnell, K. and Myers, J. G. (2004). Exploring the connection between frustration and consumer choice behavior in a dynamic decision environment. *Psychology & Marketing*, 21(12), 1059-1076.
- Stringer, E.T. (1999). Action research (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Surprenant, C.F. and Solomon, M.R. (1987). Predictability and personalization in the service encounter. *Journal of Marketing*, 51(2), 86-96.
- Swan, J. E. and Combs, L. J. (1976). Product performance and consumer satisfaction: A new concept. *Journal of Marketing*, 40(2), 25-33.
- Szymanski, D.M. and Henard, D.H. (2001). Customer satisfaction: a meta-analysis of the empirical evidence. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29(1), 16-35.
- Tabachnick, B. G. and Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics*. (5th ed.), Pearson Education, Boston.
- Tanaka, J. S. (1993). Multifaceted conceptions of fit in structural equation models. In Bollen, K. A. and Long, J. S. (Eds.) *Testing structural models* (pp.10-39). Sage Publications. Newbury Park.
- Taylor, P. and Bain, P. (2001). Trade unions, workers' rights and the frontier of control in UK call centers. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 22(1), 39-66.
- Taylor, P. Baldry, C., Bain, P. and Ellis, V. (2003). 'A unique working environment': health, sickness and absence management in UK call centres. *Work Employment and Society*, 17(3), 435-458.
- Taylor, S.A., Hunter, G.L. and Longfellow, T.A. (2006). Testing an expanded attitude model of goal-directed behavior in a loyalty context. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 19, 18-39.
- Taylor, P. Mulvey, G., Hyman, J. and Bain, P. (2002). Work organization, control and the experience of work in call centres. *Work Employment and Society*, 16(1), 133-150.

- Teixeira, T., Wedel, M. and Pieters, R. (2012). Emotion-induced engagement in Internet video advertisements. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(2), 144-159.
- Tronvoll, B. (2011). Negative emotions and their effect on customer complaint behaviour. *Journal of Service Management*, 22(1), 111-134.
- Tse, D.K. and Wilton, P.C. (1988). Models of consumer satisfaction formation: An extension. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25 (2), 204-212.
- Tse, A., Tse, K.C., Yin, C.H., Ting, C.B., Yi, K.W., Yee, K.P. and Hong, W.C. (1995). Comparing two methods of sending out questionnaires: e-mail versus mail. *Journal of the Market Research Society*, 4(37), 441-445.
- Tuu, H.H., Olsen, S.O. and Linh, P.T.T. (2011). The moderator effects of perceived risk, objective knowledge and certainty in the satisfaction-loyalty relationship. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 28(5), 363-375.
- Uncles, M.D., Grahame, R., D. and Hammond, K. (2003). Customer loyalty and customer loyalty programs. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 20(4), 294-317.
- Unziker, D.K. (1999). The psychology of being put on hold: an exploratory study of service quality. *Psychology & Marketing*, 16(4), 327-350.
- van Dun, Z., Bloemer, J. and Henseler, J. (2011). Perceived customer contact centre quality: conceptual foundation and scale development. *The Service Industries Journal*, 31(8), 1347-1363.
- Van Mechelen, I. and Hennes, K. (2009). The appraisal basis of anger occurrence and intensity revisited. *Cognition and Emotion*, 23(7), 1373-1388.
- Van Steenburg, E., Spears, N. and Fabrizze, R. O. (2013). Point of purchase or point of frustration? Consumer frustration tendencies and response in a retail setting. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 12(5), 389-400.
- Voss, G. B., Parasuraman, A. and Grewal, D. (1998). The roles of price, performance, and expectations in determining satisfaction in service exchanges. *Journal of Marketing*, 62(4), 46-61.
- Voss, K.E., Spangenberg, E.R. and Grohmann, B. (2003). Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of consumer attitude. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 40(3), 310-320.
- Wallace, C.M., Eagleson, G. and Waldersee, R. (2000). The sacrificial HR strategy in call centers. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 11(2), 174-184.
- Walsh, G., Evanschitzky, H. and Wunderlich, M. (2008). Identification and analysis of moderator variables: Investigating the customer satisfaction-loyalty link. *European Journal of Marketing*, 42 (9/10), 977-1004.
- Watson, L. and Spence, M. T. (2007). Causes and consequences of emotions on consumer behaviour: A review and integrative cognitive appraisal theory. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41(5/6), 487-511.
- Watson, D., Clark, L. A. and Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: the PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(6), 1063-1070.

- Weber, R. (2004). Editor's comments: the rhetoric of positivism versus interpretivism: a personal view. *MIS Quarterly*, 28(1), 3-12.
- Weible, R. and Wallace, J. (1998). Cyber research: the impact of the Internet on data collection. *Marketing Research*, 10(3), 18-31.
- Weiss, H. and Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work. In *Research in Organization Behavior: An Annual Series of Analytical Essays and Critical Reviews*, ed. BM Staw, LL Cummings, 18:1-74. Greenwich, CT: JAI. 373 pp.
- Westbrook, R.A. (1980). A rating scale for measuring product/service satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing*, 44(4), 68-72.
- Westbrook, R.A. (1987). Product/ consumption-based affective responses and postpurchase processes. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24(3), 258-270.
- Westbrook, R.A. and Oliver, R.L. (1991). The dimensionality of consumption emotion patterns and consumer satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18(1), 84-91.
- Westbrook, R.A. and Reilly, M.D. (1983). Value-percept disparity: an alternative to the disconfirmation of expectations theory of consumer satisfaction. *Advances in Consumer Research*. 10(1), 256-261.
- Westbrook, K.W. and Peterson, R.M. (1998). Business-to-business selling determinants of quality. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 27(1), 51-62.
- Wetzer, I.M., Zeelenberg, M. and Pieters, R. (2007). 'Never eat in that restaurant, I did!' Exploring why people engage in negative word-of-mouth communication. *Psychology & Marketing*, 24(8), 661-680.
- White, C.J. (2010). The impact of emotions on service quality, satisfaction, and positive word-of-mouth intentions over time. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 26(5/6), 381-394.
- Whiting, A. and Donthu, N. (2006). Managing voice-to-voice encounters: reducing the agony of being put on hold. *Journal of Service Research*, 8(3), 234-244.
- Wong, A. and Sohal, A. (2003). A critical incident approach to the examination of customer relationship management in a retail chain: An exploratory study. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 6(4), 248-262.
- Wright, W.F. and Bower, G.H. (1992). Mood effects on subjective probability assessment. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 52(2), 276-291.
- Yeager, D. S., Krosnick, J. A., Chang, L., Javitz, H. S., Levendusky, M. S., Simpser, A. and Wang, R. (2011). Comparing the accuracy of RDD telephone surveys and internet surveys conducted with probability and non-probability samples. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 75(4), 709-747.
- Yi, Y. (1990). A critical review of consumer satisfaction. In V. Zeithaml (Ed.), *Review of marketing* (pp. 68-123). Chicago: American Marketing Association.
- Young, P. T. (1973). *Emotion in man and animal*, 2nd ed. New York: Robert E. Krieger.

Zeithaml, V.A. and Bitner, M.J. (1996). *Services Marketing*. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., Singapore.

Zeithaml, V.A., Berry, L.L. and Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioral consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(2), 31-46.

Zohar, E., Mandelbaum, A. and Shimkin, N. (2002). Adaptive behavior of impatient customers in tele-queues: theory and empirical support. *Management Science*, 48(4), 566-583.

**Appendix 1. Study 1a. The discussion guide**

I want to thank you for taking the time with me today. I am Aude Rychalski and I would like to discuss with you about your recent experience with a call center. This is the main theme of my research. The focus group session should last less than one hour and a half. The session will be recorded since I do not want to miss or forget any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential.

Focus-group 1

Number	Gender	Age	Business Activity
1			
2			
3			

1. Can you describe your last (most recent) experience with a call center? Who did you call and why?
2. What are your opinions about call centers? Why?
3. How did you feel during the call? Why? Can you explain?
4. Is there anything more you would like to add?

Thank you for your time



Appendix 2. Study 1a. Transcripts of the 2 focus groups

Study 1a. Focus Group 1 – Transcript in French

Je tenais à vous remercier pour avoir accepté de participer à cet échange aujourd’hui. J’aimerais que l’on discute ensemble de votre dernière expérience avec un centre d’appels. Il s’agit du thème principal de mes recherches. L’entretien ne devrait pas durer plus d’1h30. Cet échange sera enregistré pour retranscription et afin de ne rater aucun commentaire. Bien évidemment, vos réponses resteront anonymes et confidentielles.

Number	Focus group	Gender	Age	Business Activity
1	1h32	Female	25	Bank
		Female	42	Mail-order sales
		Male	60	Bank

**Modératrice:** Pouvez-vous me décrire votre expérience la plus récente avec un centre d’appels? Qui avez-vous appelé et pourquoi ?

**Répondant 2 :** Moi, j’ai commandé des vêtements sur *Nom de l’entreprise 1*, c’était il y a une semaine. J’ai commandé sur Internet mais j’ai eu un problème : j’ai payé mes deux articles mais je n’en ai reçu qu’un. J’ai donc préféré les appeler parce que là, il s’agit d’argent.

**Modératrice :** Très bien. Et toi Répondant 1 ?

**Répondant 1 :** Moi, c’était avec ma banque, il y a deux jours. J’ai voulu contacter mon banquier directement mais c’est impossible. J’ai commandé un chéquier il y a de cela trois semaines et il n’est toujours pas arrivé. Le problème, c’est que comme mon banquier n’était pas disponible et que l’hôtesse d’accueil n’avais pas accès à son agenda, ils m’ont mis en relation avec le centre d’appels et là, c’est devenu compliqué.

**Modératrice :** Compliqué ? c’est-à-dire ?

**Répondant 1 :** Bah, le temps d’attente, l’incompréhension des interlocuteurs

**Modératrice :** Très bien, on y reviendra dans quelques minutes. Et toi Répondant 3, quelle était ta dernière expérience ?

**Répondant 3 :** Moi, c’était également avec ma banque. Je voulais juste prendre un rendez-vous avec mon banquier mais même problème que *Répondant 1*, j’ai dû passer par le centre d’appels

**Modératrice :** C’était quand ?

**Répondant 3 :** Oh bah, pas plus tard qu’hier en fait

**Modératrice :** Très bien. On va donc pour les prochaines questions se focaliser sur ces expériences uniquement. Quelles sont vos opinions au sujet des centres d’appels ? Pourquoi?

**Répondant 3 :** Oh la la la, il y a tellement de choses à dire

**Répondant 2 :** Oh ça. Comme je le disais, c'est toujours compliqué et finalement quelle que soit la raison de l'appel ou l'entreprise qu'on appelle, c'est souvent la même chose

**Modératrice :** A savoir ?

**Répondant 2 :** On sait qu'on va devoir attendre. C'est typique des centres d'appels. Demande à n'importe qui, on doit toujours attendre. On le sait dès le départ, on compose le numéro et directement, on est mis en attente, on doit appuyer sur les boutons, écouter leur musique et quand on se trompe de bouton, on doit tout recommencer.

**Répondant 1 :** C'est bien vrai. Moi, quand j'entends 'centre d'appels', la première chose qui me vient en tête, c'est 'le temps d'attente'. Ça devient fatigant et en plus c'est un passage obligé. Pour ma commande à *Nom de l'entreprise 1*, j'ai dû attendre plus de 10 minutes à écouter leur musique et leur discours sur le fait qu'ils font le maximum pour écourter notre temps d'attente. Le problème c'est que souvent, si on veut un interlocuteur, on est obligé d'appeler le centre d'appels d'autant que moi, c'était pour un problème de facture donc je voulais régler cela avec une personne. Il n'y a pas de magasins donc j'ai été obligé d'appeler.

**Répondant 3 :** Je suis d'accord avec toi et moi, c'était avec ma banque où il est question d'argent également donc c'est stressant. Vous imaginez ma surprise quand j'ai été mis en relation avec un centre d'appels alors que je cherchais à joindre mon banquier. Déjà, je n'arrive pas à contacter mon interlocuteur (alors que j'ai sa ligne directe) mais en plus ils te font attendre. C'est hyper anxiogène et stressant. Et comme tu dis *Répondant 1*, on sait qu'on va devoir attendre donc dès le départ, on n'est pas en bonne position. Là, pour ma banque, j'ai dû attendre 15 minutes pour être en contact avec quelqu'un qui en plus ne pouvait rien pour moi

**Modératrice :** C'est-à-dire ?

**Répondant 3 :** Hé bien, j'ai perdu mon temps la première fois, il ne pouvait pas répondre à ma demande donc j'ai gaspillé mon temps

**Modératrice :** Très bien, on y reviendra. Donc si j'ai bien compris, le temps d'attente est une des caractéristiques des centres d'appels. Est-ce que vous pensez qu'il y en a d'autres ?

**Répondant 1 :** Oh oui, la relation avec l'interlocuteur

**Répondants 2 et 3 (ensemble) :** Oh oui, c'est horrible

**Modératrice :** Qu'est-ce que vous entendez par là ?

**Répondant 1 :** Le plus souvent, ils ne comprennent rien

**Modératrice :** C'est-à-dire ?

**Répondant 2 :** Hé bien, une fois qu'on est en ligne avec quelqu'un, il faut ensuite se faire comprendre. Parfois, ils ne parlent pas la même langue que nous ou on n'arrive pas à se faire comprendre d'un point de vue plus technique ou parfois ils sont complètement incompetents et on doit à nouveau attendre pour avoir la bonne personne au téléphone. Moi, avec *Nom de l'entreprise 1*, j'étais déjà frustrée d'avoir été débité alors que je n'avais qu'un article, ensuite, je dois attendre et je n'ai pas que ça à faire d'autant que pour moi, cela me paraît simple à régler, ils m'envoient l'article et hop, c'est fini. Mais heureusement, cela s'est bien fini.

**Modératrice : C'est-à-dire ?**

**Répondant 2 :** Hé bien, j'ai eu mon article

**Modératrice : OK, on y reviendra. J'aimerais avoir l'avis des autres sur les caractéristiques des centres d'appels**

**Répondant 1 :** Hé bien, les interactions avec les interlocuteurs sont horribles. Ils suivent un script, on doit répéter nos informations personnelles, cela n'a aucun sens. Il n'y a aucune relation personnelle, rien. En plus, cette personne avait un accent à couper au couteau et je ne comprenais rien à ce qu'elle me disait et surtout elle ne comprenait pas ce que je lui disais. Donc, c'était sans issue.

**Répondant 3 :** Ils suivent un script et ont une liste de choses à faire. Cela ne requiert aucune compétence particulière. Ils font des tâches répétitives. Moi, il m'est arrivé la même chose avec ma banque. Vous vous rendez compte, ils gèrent notre argent et ne sont pas capables de comprendre notre demande. Il n'y a aucune empathie et on parle d'argent, c'est grave. Le pire, c'est le problème de langage. Soit c'est trop technique soit ils ne parlent pas bien notre langue. Je ne connais pas un centre d'appels où l'interlocuteur parle de manière correcte et compréhensible. De ce fait, tu ne te sens pas unique. Il y a clairement un manque de personnalisation. Ce serait bien si quand on appelle et qu'on a enfin un interlocuteur au téléphone, on nous dise directement « Bonjour M.XXX, merci de votre appel, en quoi puis-je vous aider ». Au lieu de cela, c'est « Bonjour, merci de me communiquer votre nom que j'accède à votre dossier », c'est impersonnel.

**Modératrice : Vous êtes tous d'accord avec cela ?**

**Répondant 2 :** Oui, complètement, on attend, on répète, on passe du temps avec quelqu'un qui ne comprend rien et qui ne nous rassure pas du tout pour la suite.

**Modératrice : Donc, vos expériences n'étaient que négatives ?**

**Répondant 1 :** La plupart du temps, oui. Cela étant, il y a parfois des issues positives

**Modératrice : Justement, parlons de ce que vous avez ressenti. Qu'avez-vous ressenti ? Pourquoi ? Pouvez-vous détailler ?**

**Répondant 1 :** Moi, j'étais soulagée parce qu'au final l'interlocuteur a trouvé une solution et c'était le but. En fait, ça partait mal mais après 20 minutes de conversation, il a réussi à me dire que la commande de chéquier n'avait pas été validée et qu'ils allaient m'en envoyer un. Je l'ai reçu deux jours après, j'étais soulagée.

**Répondant 2 :** Exactement la même chose pour moi. Comme je l'ai dit, j'avais fait ma commande sur Internet et il manquait un article alors que j'avais payé pour tout. J'ai passé du temps à expliquer mon problème mais en fait ils avaient déjà envoyé l'article. Tout ça pour ça... L'interlocuteur s'est excusé et je me suis sentie soulagée. Mon problème était réglé et j'ai reçu l'article le lendemain.

**Répondant 3 :** Moi, si je me base sur cette expérience, cela a été plus négatif et compliqué. Pour rappel, je veux juste prendre un rendez-vous avec mon banquier. La première fois que j'ai appelé, l'interlocuteur ne pouvait pas répondre à ma demande. J'étais si frustré et surtout je pose la question : Qui peut le faire ? Je ne peux pas le faire moi-même, l'interlocuteur non plus, je me suis senti impuissant. Et j'étais si frustré, je pensais que cela allait être simple à faire. Cependant, le problème a été solutionné après un deuxième appel.

**Répondant 1 :** Oui, je te comprends, ce sentiment de frustration quand on ne répond pas à notre demande. En fait, on pense que c’est un problème simple à régler mais bien souvent, ce n’est pas le cas.

**Modératrice :** *Répondant 3*, tu as parlé d’impuissance, est-ce que tu peux développer ?

**Répondant 3 :** Hé bien, comme on l’a dit tout à l’heure, le centre d’appels est souvent le seul moyen de communiquer avec l’entreprise. Donc, je dépends du centre d’appels mais si en plus l’interlocuteur ne peut rien faire, que se passe-t-il ? Je suis pieds et poings liés, je n’ai aucun moyen de solutionner mon problème, c’est ma seule clef ! Et frustré parce qu’on ne répond pas à ma demande.

**Modératrice :** Vous êtes d’accord avec lui ?

**Répondant 1 :** Oui, je comprends ce que tu veux dire. Sur ma dernière expérience, je n’ai pas ressenti cela mais cela m’est déjà arrivé. On tourne en rond, on veut trouver une solution mais on n’y arrive pas et on ne contrôle rien puisqu’on dépend du centre d’appels et donc de sa compréhension et de ses compétences.

**Répondant 3 :** Oui, en fait, ce n’est pas nous qui maîtrisons donc cela nous inquiète et nous rend impuissants. Cela m’est déjà arrivé aussi mais c’était une expérience plus lointaine.

**Modératrice :** Très bien, est-ce que vous avez des choses à ajouter ?

**Répondant 2 :** Moi non mais c’est un sujet passionnant, il y a tant à dire. Aussi bien en positif qu’en négatif mais la plupart du temps, c’est plutôt négatif

**Répondant 3 :** Ah ça, c’est bien vrai.

**Modératrice :** Hé bien, je vous remercie pour m’avoir accordé votre temps et pour votre motivation. Merci beaucoup.

**Study 1a. Focus Group 2 – Transcript in French**

Je tenais à vous remercier pour avoir accepté de participer à cet échange aujourd’hui. J’aimerais que l’on discute ensemble de votre dernière expérience avec un centre d’appels. Il s’agit du thème principal de mes recherches. L’entretien ne devrait pas durer plus d’1h30. Cet échange sera enregistré pour retranscription et afin de ne rater aucun commentaire. Bien évidemment, vos réponses resteront anonymes et confidentielles.

Number	Focus group	Gender	Age	Business Activity
2	1h28	Female	47	Insurance
		Female	50	Bank
		Female	35	Mail-order sales
		Female	42	Mail-order sales
		Male	58	Insurance
		Male	43	Bank
		Male	38	Bank

**Modératrice: Pouvez-vous me décrire votre expérience la plus récente avec un centre d'appels? Qui avez-vous appelé et pourquoi ?**

**Répondant 1 :** Moi, j'ai contacté ma compagnie d'assurance il y a trois jours. J'avais un souci pour la prise en charge d'une fuite, mon dossier traine depuis des mois et je venais de recevoir un courrier expliquant qu'il manquait des pièces donc je les ai appelé.

**Répondant 2 :** En ce qui me concerne, j'ai contacté ma banque il y a quelques jours parce que je n'avais toujours pas reçu ma carte de crédit.

**Modératrice : Et toi, Répondant 3?**

**Répondant 3 :** Moi, c'était des vêtements par correspondance sur *Nom de l'entreprise 1*. J'ai commandé un article mais ils l'ont débité deux fois donc je les ai appelés. C'était il y a une petite semaine

**Répondant 4 :** Moi aussi, j'ai acheté des CD en VPC et ils sont arrivés dans un sale état alors j'ai tout de suite contacté l'entreprise. En plus, ils ne vendent que par Internet donc je n'avais que le centre d'appels pour les contacter, histoire d'avoir quand même quelqu'un au téléphone

**Modératrice : Et toi, Répondant 5?**

**Répondant 5 :** Moi, il s'agissait de ma compagnie d'assurance, le même problème que *Répondant 1* suite à l'orage l'année dernière, ça traine...

**Modératrice : Et vous ?**

**Répondant 6 :** Ma banque, il y a deux jours. Je voulais un rendez-vous rapidement avec mon banquier, cela a été la catastrophe

**Modératrice : OK, on va en reparler en détails un peu plus tard. Et toi, Répondant 7 ?**

**Répondant 7 :** Ma banque également. C'est une banque via Internet donc pas d'agence et quand j'ai pris la décision de prendre cette banque, j'ai hésité mais j'ai été attiré par leur offre. Le problème c'est que ce n'est que virtuel...

**Modératrice : Quand est-ce que tu les as contactés ?**

**Répondant 7 :** Vendredi dernier (soit il y a 5 jours)

**Répondant 3 :** Cela ne te stresse pas de faire gérer ton argent par une banque sans agence, sans contact en face-à-face ?

**Répondant 7 :** Au début non mais c'est vrai que c'est compliqué pour les échanges. J'y suis depuis 2 ans mais je pense que je vais résilier et changer pour des banques plus connues.

**Répondant 5 :** Tu m'étonnes, surtout pour l'argent

**Modératrice : Très bien. Merci à vous de nous avoir présenté le contexte et les raisons pour lesquels vous avez été en contact avec un centre d'appel. A partir de ces différentes expériences, j'aimerais dans un premier temps connaître vos opinions au sujet des centres d'appels. Merci de détailler votre réponse**

**Répondants 1, 6 et 7 (ensemble) :** L'attente

**Modératrice : Vous êtes tous d'accord ?**

**Tous les répondants :** Oh oui

**Modératrice :** Alors, expliquez-moi ?

**Répondant 6 :** Je n'en peux plus d'attendre. Vous savez ce que je fais ? Je mets le haut-parleur et je fais le ménage. J'ai l'impression de ne pas perdre de temps.

**Répondant 2 :** Tu fais le ménage, toi ?

*Tous : Rires*

**Modératrice :** C'est vrai que cela paraît suspect ! Plus sérieusement, revenons au sujet s'il vous plaît

**Répondant 6 :** Non sérieusement, on doit toujours attendre, je ne connais pas un centre d'appels où on n'attend pas. On le sait dès le départ mais c'est ennuyant.

**Répondant 7 :** C'est sûr que c'est l'une des caractéristiques des centres d'appels. Je suis sûr que si on pose la question à une personne au hasard, c'est ce qui ressortira en premier. On doit toujours attendre. Le truc c'est que c'est comme si on faisait la queue mais comme on n'a pas de contact physique, cela paraît encore plus long

**Répondant 3 :** Oui et puis surtout, tu ne sais pas quelle va être l'issue de l'appel parce que c'est comme en magasin sauf que tu payes. Pour joindre le dernier centre d'appels, j'ai quand même attendu 20 minutes avant de joindre quelqu'un et je paye pour avoir une réponse. Je n'ai pas le choix, l'entreprise n'a pas de magasin physique.

**Modératrice :** Les autres ?

**Répondant 1 :** Oui, le temps d'attente est énervant, on sait dès le départ que ça va être compliqué. C'est plus souvent long que court. Cela étant, une fois, j'ai juste appuyé sur le bouton correspondant à mon problème, la musique a démarré et j'ai eu un interlocuteur, j'ai peut-être attendu 30 secondes mais cela n'est arrivé qu'une seule fois.

**Répondant 5 :** Oui, c'est plutôt rare

**Modératrice :** Est-ce que vous pensez à d'autres éléments ?

**Répondant 7 :** Leurs conditions de travail doivent être pauvres. Etre en face d'un ordinateur, être au téléphone avec des gens et essayer de trouver une solution. Ils doivent se faire insulter par les gens.

**Répondant 2 :** Une de mes amies travaille dans un centre d'appels. Elle est sous payée, elle a deux pauses par jour et elle doit demander la permission pour aller au toilette, c'est pas bizarre ?

**Répondant 6 :** Il n'y a pas d'empathie. Comme il n'y a aucune personnalisation, on peut douter de la relation. C'est compliqué de leur faire comprendre qu'on a un vrai problème, ils entendent cela à longueur de journée.

**Modératrice :** S'il vous plaît, revenons à leurs conditions de travail, aux employés, on parlera de leur comportement un peu plus tard. Tu disais Répondant 7 que leurs conditions de travail doivent être pauvres, êtes-vous tous d'accord avec cela ? Pensez-vous à d'autres éléments relatifs à leur travail ou comportement ?



**Répondant 3 :** Bah effectivement, c'est bien connu qu'il y a du turnover, cela doit être insupportable de passer la journée au téléphone à n'entendre que des plaintes mais bon ils sont payés pour cela

**Répondant 6 :** Peut-être mais ils ne sont pas beaucoup payés

**Répondant 3 :** Oui, enfin, vu comment il est difficile de discuter avec eux

**Modératrice :** C'est-à-dire ?

**Répondant 3 :** Ils ne savent pas parler français correctement. La plupart du temps, les centres sont délocalisés et on ne comprend rien tant leur accent est prononcé

**Répondant 2 :** Bah c'est vrai que ce n'est pas évident et moi, cela m'inquiète. J'ai quand même appelé pour ma banque et parler argent avec quelqu'un qui ne maîtrise pas ma langue, j'avoue que cela m'inquiète. Et cela ne donne pas une bonne image de l'entreprise. On leur confie notre argent quand même.

**Répondant 1 :** Je suis d'accord avec toi. Si t'appelles pour avoir un renseignement, moi, cela ne me dérange pas mais dès que cela touche à l'argent ou à une facture, moi, cela m'inquiète également.

**Modératrice :** Vous partagez cela concernant la maîtrise de la langue française ?

**Répondant 5 :** Oui, tout à fait mais je trouve quand même qu'il y a une évolution depuis 2/3 ans dans le recrutement. De plus en plus d'entreprises relocalisent en France car elles savent que cela peut avoir un impact négatif sur leur image mais c'est vrai que quand tu tombes sur quelqu'un qui a un accent nord-africain (par exemple), ça te démotive encore plus

**Modératrice :** Vous pensez à d'autres éléments ?

**Répondant 4 :** Leur travail doit être routinier. Dès qu'on appelle, on a l'impression qu'ils suivent un script et ce qui fait que parfois, ils ne répondent pas correctement à la question. Il déroule leur speech mais cela ne tient pas compte de notre problème.

**Modératrice :** C'est-à-dire ?

**Répondant 4 :** Bah quand on appelle, c'est « Bonjour, merci de me donner votre nom que je puisse accéder à votre dossier » et ils enchainent leurs questions comme s'ils récitaient quelque chose

**Répondant 2 :** C'est complètement cela et cela manque de naturel. On ne peut pas créer de lien spécifique avec cette personne d'autant qu'on ne la voit pas. Ils se fichent de notre problème, on est juste une personne de plus à gérer.

**Répondant 4 :** Mais le manque de compréhension peut aussi influencer les interactions. Quand l'interlocuteur utilise un langage technique, moi, je suis perdue et j'ai assez de soucis comme ça.

**Répondant 1 :** Alors forcément, on s'énerve encore plus et ça part dans tous les sens, on hausse la voix, comme si on allait plus se faire comprendre.

**Modératrice :** Ce que vous voulez dire, si j'ai bien compris, c'est que ces problèmes de langage, de tâches routinières, de script ont un impact sur les relations que vous avez avec l'employé du centre d'appel ?



**Répondant 3 :** Complètement. Cela dénature la relation. Il n'y a pas de personnalisation, on est juste un dossier parmi d'autre

**Répondant 2 :** Je pense que la personne enchaîne tellement d'appels que c'est compliqué pour elle de ressentir de l'empathie, de comprendre à quel point c'est important pour nous de résoudre notre problème

**Répondant 1 :** Je suis bien d'accord, je ne cherche pas à leur trouver une excuse mais il est clair que leurs conditions de travail ne doivent pas les encourager à faire de leur mieux.

**Répondant 5 :** Je ne suis pas d'accord. Ils représentent l'entreprise. Comme on l'a dit, c'est parfois, le seul moyen d'être en contact avec l'entreprise. Ils doivent donc faire leur possible pour nous rendre service, nous comprendre et résoudre notre problème mais au nom de la mondialisation, ça devient compliqué. Sans parler de leurs compétences

**Modératrice : C'est-à-dire ?**

**Répondant 5 :** Bah parfois, ils sont juste incompetents ou ils n'ont pas les autorisations nécessaires pour résoudre notre problème. On attend, on explique notre problème pendant 5 minutes pour s'entendre dire qu'ils ne sont pas compétents et qu'il faut soit rappeler soit attendre pendant qu'ils nous mettent en contact avec quelqu'un d'autre. C'est hyper frustrant.

**Modératrice : On va parler de la frustration un peu plus tard. Je voudrais juste revenir sur ce que vous avez dit. Si je résume, une des caractéristiques des centres d'appels, ce serait aussi le manque de personnalisation, d'empathie et de compétences de la part de l'employé ?**

**Répondant 4 :** Oui, c'est ça. Moi, pour mon histoire de CD, la personne que j'ai eu au téléphone a bien compris mon problème, a proposé de prendre en charge le retour des CD et à m'envoyer des CD en meilleur état mais n'était pas en mesure de faire un geste. Et je ne voulais pas me laisser faire. Alors elle m'a passé une autre personne qui a pu s'en occuper mais j'ai dû encore attendre.

**Répondant 1 :** Moi, ça fait des mois que ça traîne. Ma compagnie d'assurance me dit à chaque fois qu'il manque une pièce au dossier, je n'ai jamais le même interlocuteur et je suis devenue le dossier #123. Donc là, c'est clair qu'il n'y a plus d'empathie et aucune personnalisation. Cela devient frustrant.

**Modératrice : Justement, parlons de ce que vous avez ressenti. Qu'avez-vous ressenti ? Pourquoi ? Pouvez-vous détailler ?**

**Répondant 7 :** J'ai eu un moment difficile avec cette expérience. J'ai attendu 30 minutes avant de joindre quelqu'un. Elle ne parlait pas bien français donc j'ai passé du temps à expliquer mon problème. Mais au final, on a trouvé une solution and cela marche. J'étais soulagé parce que la solution a été trouvée après le premier appel. Cela a été difficile mais le problème a été résolu.

**Répondant 2 :** Je suis totalement d'accord. C'était la même chose pour moi. Le plus important était de régler mon problème. Quand j'ai appelé, l'interlocuteur m'a dit que le problème venait de ma banque et qu'il était réglé. J'étais si soulagée. Ce n'est pas de ma faute et en plus, il y a une solution.

**Répondant 5 :** Quelle que soit l'expérience, quand ils trouvent une solution, on ressent une sorte de soulagement.

**Modératrice :** Est-ce pareil pour d'autres ? Avez-vous ressenti aussi du soulagement ou une autre émotion ?

**Répondant 5 :** Moi non, j'ai plutôt ressenti de la frustration comme je le disais

**Modératrice :** Personne d'autre n'a d'exemple sur la frustration?

**Tous :** Non

**Répondant 1 :** Enfin, si mais de manière différente

**Modératrice :** Peux-tu détailler s'il te plaît ?

**Répondant 1 :** Je suis frustrée parce qu'à chaque fois que j'appelle, j'ai les papiers demandés et je pense résoudre enfin mon problème. Mais à chaque fois, il y a quelque chose qui ne va pas. Soit la pièce n'est pas la bonne, soit, j'ai un nouvel interlocuteur, je pense que je n'y arriverai jamais. Donc, là, avant mon dernier appel, je les avais menacés d'écrire à 60 millions de consommateurs et comme par magie quand j'ai téléphoné la dernière fois, ils m'ont directement mis en relation avec le responsable du service. Ils avaient dû écrire « 60 millions de consommateurs » dans mon dossier

**Tous :** *Rires*

**Répondant 1 :** Bref. J'ai donc été frustré mais soulagé car après X appels, ils vont enfin pouvoir prendre en compte mon dossier et je vais pouvoir être prise en charge. En fait, on passe par plusieurs étapes dans les émotions je pense

**Répondant 5 :** Moi, c'est exactement la même chose mais j'en suis au 3<sup>ème</sup> appel. Je vais faire comme toi, les menacer de prévenir 60 millions de consommateurs. Je suis frustré également parce qu'ils n'ont pas répondu à mes attentes.

**Répondant 4 :** J'ai ressenti la même chose mais pour des raisons différentes. L'interlocuteur n'a pas complètement résolu mon problème. Il était compétent pour une partie donc j'étais un peu frustrée parce que le problème n'a pas été résolu dans sa totalité.

**Modératrice :** C'est-à-dire ?

**Répondant 4 :** Comme je le disais. La personne pouvait prendre en charge le renvoi des CD mais j'ai dû attendre pour avoir un geste. Cela n'a pas duré longtemps puisque c'était sur le même appel mais cela ne peut pas se faire en une fois, on doit patienter.

**Répondant 3 :** Moi, j'ai ressenti également de la frustration parce que le centre d'appels rencontrait des problèmes techniques. L'interlocuteur m'a dit qu'il ne pouvait pas avoir accès à mes informations personnelles donc il ne pouvait rien faire. Cela signifie qu'ils m'ont fait perdre mon temps et mon argent sans issue positive. C'était vraiment une situation frustrante. Je dois rappeler mais je sais d'avance que cela va m'énerver. Et puis, il y a aussi une forme d'impuissance.

**Modératrice :** D'impuissance ? C'est-à-dire ?

**Répondant 3 :** Je sentais que je ne pouvais rien contrôler. Le centre d'appels est le seul endroit où on peut trouver une solution de nos jours. On dépend du bon vouloir de

quelqu'un d'autre, c'est agaçant. Moi, ça me met hors de moi ce genre de chose, dans une rage folle, je pourrai entrer en conflit comme dans une bagarre.

**Répondant 1 :** Oui, c'est ça, la situation est dans les mains de quelqu'un d'autre. On n'a aucun pouvoir, c'est le désarroi le plus total. Notre problème n'est pas résolu et surtout on ne peut rien y faire, on patiente, on rappelle en espérant tomber sur quelqu'un de plus compétent ou en attendant qu'ils travaillent sur notre problème.

**Modératrice :** Très bien, est-ce que vous avez des choses à ajouter ?

**Tous :** Non

**Répondant 7 :** En tout cas, cela faisait du bien d'en parler et de voir qu'on n'est pas les seuls

**Répondant 4 :** Oui, c'est vrai

**Modératrice :** Hé bien, un grand merci à vous tous. Cela va bien m'aider. A bientôt

Appendix 3. Study 1a. Translations of the 2 focus groups in English

Study 1a. Focus Group 1 – Translation of the Transcript in English

I want to thank you for taking the time with me today. I am Aude Rychalski and I would like to discuss with you about your recent experience with a call center. This is the main theme of my research. The focus group session should last less than one hour and a half. The session will be recorded since I do not want to miss or forget any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential.

Number	Focus group	Gender	Age	Business Activity
1	1h32	Female	25	Bank
		Female	42	Mail-order sales
		Male	60	Bank

**Moderator:** Can you describe your last (most recent) experience with a call center? Who did you call and why?

**Respondent 2:** I ordered clothes on the Internet with *Company Name1* but I had a problem. I paid for 2 items but I received only one. I decided to call them; it is a matter of money

**Moderator:** OK. And you *Respondent 1*?

**Respondent 1:** It was with my bank two days ago. I wanted to contact my banker but it was impossible. I ordered a checkbook 3 weeks ago and I did not receive it. The problem is that since my banker was not available and that the hostess did not have access to his diary, she directed me to the call center and it became complicated

**Moderator:** Complicated? What do you mean?

**Respondent 1:** The waiting time, the lack of understanding from the CCR

**Moderator:** Ok. We'll talk about this later. And you, *Respondent 3*, what was your last experience?

**Respondent 3:** It was also with my bank. I just wanted to get an appointment with my banker but same problem as *Respondent 1*, I have been redirected to the call center

**Moderator:** When?

**Respondent 3:** Yesterday

**Moderator:** OK. So for the next questions, let's talk about this specific experience. What do you think about call centers?

**Respondent 3:** Oh la la la, there is so much thing to say

**Respondent 2:** Oh. As I said, it is always complicated and whatever the reason why you call, it is always the same thing

**Moderator:** Which is?

**Respondent 2:** We know that we will have to wait. It is a characteristic of the call centers. Ask anybody, we always have to wait. We know it in advance. You dial the number and you are directly put on hold. You must press 1, 2, listen to the music and when you made a mistake, you have to start from scratch

**Respondent 1:** That is true. When I hear ‘call centers’, the first thing that comes to my mind is ‘wait length’. It is annoying and you have to wait. When I did my order at Company Name1, I had to wait more than 10 minutes listening to their music, their speech and the fact that they do their best to shorten the wait length. The problem is that if we want to talk to someone, we have to wait. It was important for me as it was a problem with my bill and I wanted to talk to someone. There is no store.

**Respondent 3:** I agree with you. It is with my bank about money so I was stressed. Imagine how surprised I was when they transfer me to a call center. I cannot contact my banker (whereas I have his professional phone number) but I also have to wait. It gives anxiety. And as you said *Respondent 1*, we know in advance that we have to wait so from the beginning, it is not good. In this case, I had to wait 15 minutes before reaching someone and he could not help me

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent 3:** I wasted my time the first time. He could not provide me an answer so I wasted my time

**Moderator:** OK. We will discuss about that. So if I well understood, the wait length is one of the characteristics of a call center. Do you have other ideas?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, interactions with the CCR

**Respondents 2 and 3 (together):** Oh yes, it is horrible

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent 1:** They do not understand anything most of the time

**Moderator:** What?

**Respondent 2:** Once you reach someone, you have to be understood. Sometimes, they do not talk the same language or we cannot explain them our problem, it is too technical or they have no skill and we have to wait again to get someone who can give us an answer With Company Name1, I was already frustrated because they charged me with two items whereas I received only one. I have to wait and I have other things to do. I thought it was an ‘easy’ problem. They send me the item and end of the story. Hopefully, it ends good.

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent 2:** I received my item

**Moderator:** OK, I would like to have the opinions of the other

**Respondent 1:** Well, interactions with the CCR are horrible. They follow a script, we have to repeat our background, and it is non-sense. There is no personal relationship. Moreover, the CCR had a huge foreign accent and I could not understand anything. She did not understand what I was saying. It was hopeless.

**Respondent 3:** They follow a script and they have a list of things to follow. This requires no particular skills. They do repetitive tasks. The same happened to me with my bank. They manage our money and they are not able to understand our request. There is no empathy and we talked about money, it is serious. The worst is the language issue. Either it is too technical or they not speak French. I do not know a call center in which CCR speak clearly. So you did not feel unique. There is a clear lack of personalization. It would be nice if the CCR on the phone could say ‘Hello M.XXX, thanks for your call, how can I help you?’. Instead it is ‘Hello, please give me your name so that I find your file?’

**Moderator:** Do you all agree with him?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, completely. We wait, we repeat, we spend time with someone who did not understand anything and we are not reassured

**Moderator:** So your experience was negative only!

**Respondent 1:** Most of the time. Sometimes, you can have positive results

**Moderator:** So let’s talk about your feelings? How did you feel? Why?

**Respondent 1:** I was relieved because the CCR found a solution and it was my aim. It was not easy but after a 20-minute discussion, he told me that the order of my checkbook was not registered and that they will send one. I received it two days later. I was relieved

**Respondent 2:** Same for me. As I said, I ordered items on the Internet but one item was missing whereas I paid for it. I spent time explaining my problem but actually they had already sent me the item. I did all of those things ... The CCR apologized and I felt relieved. My problem was solved and I received the item the day after.

**Respondent 3:** Me, if I think about my own experience, it was negative and complicated. I just wanted to get an appointment with my banker. The first time I called, the CCR could not provide any answer. I was so frustrated and I wondered myself: Who can do it? If I cannot do myself and the CCR neither..., I felt powerless. And I was so frustrated; I thought it would be easy. However, the problem was solved after a second phone call

**Respondent 1:** Yes, I understand this feeling of frustration when you do not have any answer. Actually we think that it is easy to solve but this is not the case.

**Moderator:** *Respondent 3*, you mentioned ‘powerlessness’, can you develop?

**Respondent 3:** Well as we said, call centers are the only way to interact with the company. So you depend on the call center but if the CCR cannot help, what happens? I am bound hand and feet. I cannot solve my problem, it is the only way ! And frustrated because I had no answer.

**Moderator:** Do you agree with him?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, I know what you mean. I did not feel that last time but I already felt powerless. We want to find a solution but we can’t and we did not control anything since we depend on the call center and on CCR’s skills and understanding.

**Respondent 3:** Yeah, actually, we do not master so we are worried and powerless. It already happened to me but it was a former experience

**Moderator:** OK, is there anything more you would like to add?

**All respondents:** No

**Moderator:** Ok, thanks for your time and motivation. Thanks a lot

**Study 1a. Focus Group 2 – Translation of the Transcript in English**

I want to thank you for taking the time with me today. I am Aude Rychalski and I would like to discuss with you about your recent experience with a call center. This is the main theme of my research. The focus group session should last less than one hour and a half. The session will be recorded since I do not want to miss or forget any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential.

Number	Focus group	Gender	Age	Business Activity
2	1h28	Female	47	Insurance
		Female	50	Bank
		Female	35	Mail-order sales
		Female	42	Mail-order sales
		Male	58	Insurance
		Male	43	Bank
		Male	38	Bank

**Moderator:** Can you describe your last (most recent) experience with a call center?

**Who did you call and why?**

**Respondent 1:** I called my insurance company 3 days ago. I had a problem with a water leak. They did not want to support it. It takes time and I just received a postal letter in which they explain that some pieces of information are missing.

**Respondent 2:** I called my bank because I did not receive my credit card yet.

**Moderator:** And you, *Respondent 3*?

**Respondent 3:** I ordered clothes on *Company Name1*. I ordered an item but I was charged twice so I called them. It was one week ago

**Respondent 4:** Me too. I bought CD on the Internet and there was disrepair. So I contacted them since I wanted to talk to someone.

**Moderator:** And you, *Respondent 5*?

**Respondent 5:** It was with my insurance company. Same as *Respondent 1* because of the storm last year

**Moderator:** And you?

**Respondent 6:** My bank, 2 days ago. I wanted to make an appointment with my banker. It was such a mess

**Moderator:** OK, we will discuss about that in few minutes. And you, *Respondent 7*?



**Respondent 7:** My bank too. It is a virtual bank so there is no agency. When I have decided to open an account with them, I hesitated a little bit but I have been attracted by their commercial offer

**Moderator:** When did you contact them?

**Respondent 7:** Last Friday (5 days ago)

**Respondent 3:** Aren't you stressed to have an account in a virtual bank without face-to-face interactions?

**Respondent 7:** At the beginning, no but it true that it is complicated to communicate. It's been 2 years but I think I am going to stop it and change for a renowned bank

**Respondent 5:** Especially for money issue

**Moderator:** Fine. Thanks for sharing your experience with a call center. From this, I would like to know your opinions about call centers. Please provide details

**Respondents 1, 6 and 7 (together):** Wait length

**Moderator:** Do you all agree?

**All:** Oh yes

**Moderator:** So tell me?

**Respondent 6:** I can't stand waiting. Do you know what I do? I put the speaker and I do housework. I feel like I do not waste my time

**Respondent 2:** Do you do housework?

**All:** *Laughs*

**Moderator:** It is true that it seems suspect. More seriously, please come back to the topic

**Respondent 6:** We always have to wait; I do not know a call center where you do not wait. We know it in advance and it is bothering

**Respondent 7:** It is surely one of the main characteristic of call centers. I am sure that if you pick someone, this will be the first thing that people would tell. We always have to wait. It is like queuing but there is no physical contact. It seems longer

**Respondent 3:** Yes and you do not know how it will be after the call. It is like in a store but you pay. When I had to call, I waited 20 minutes before reaching someone and I pay to get an answer. I do not have the choice, the company has not store

**Moderator:** Any other reaction?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, wait length is irritating. Before the call, we know it will be complicated. It is often longer than shorter. However, once, I just press 1, music has started and I reached someone. I have waited like 30 seconds but it happened once

**Respondent 5:** Yes, it is rather rare

**Moderator:** Do you have other ideas?

**Respondent 7:** Their working conditions must be poor. Being in front of a computer, on the phone with people and trying to find a solution. They must be insulted by clients.

**Respondent 2:** One of my friends works in call center. She is underpaid, she has two breaks a day and she must ask if she wants to go to the bathroom, isn't it weird?

**Respondent 6:** There is no empathy. Since there is no personalization, we can have doubt about the relation. It is difficult to make them understand that we have a problem, they hear this all day long

**Moderator:** Please, let's go back to the working conditions, do you have other ideas?

**Respondent 3:** yes, there is a lot of turnover, it must be horrible, spending your day on the phone listening to complaints but they are paid for this

**Respondent 6:** Maybe but they are underpaid

**Respondent 3:** Yes but it is difficult to discuss with them

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent 3:** They do not speak French correctly. Most of the time, call centers are outsourced and we do not understand because of their bad accent

**Respondent 2:** It is true that it was not easy for me and I am a little bit worried. I called my bank and talked about money with someone who did not master our language... And it influenced company's image. They are in charge of our money

**Respondent 1:** I agree with you. If I call for information, I do not bother but when it is about money, I feel worried

**Moderator:** Do you all agree with the language issue?

**Respondent 5:** Yes, of course even though I think it is better these last 2 or 3 years in the way they recruit people. More and more companies come back to France since they know outsourced call centers can negatively influenced their image. But when you talked to someone from North Africa, you are not motivated

**Moderator:** Do you have other ideas?

**Respondent 4:** Routine. When we call, we know that they follow a script. Therefore they do not answer correctly. They repeat a list of things without taking into account our problem.

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent 4:** When we call, they say 'Hello, please give me your name to find your personal file' and they ask questions as if they were reciting something

**Respondent 2:** That is not true. And it is artificial. You cannot have specific relationship with someone you do not see. They do not care about our problems; we are just another clients to manage.

**Respondent 4:** And the lack of understanding can influence interactions. When the representative uses a technical language, I feel lost and I have enough trouble.

**Respondent 1:** So we get irritated and it goes in all directions. We raise the voice as if we could be better understood.

**Moderator:** If I well understood, you mean that these language issues, routine, the use of script has an impact on the interactions between you as a client and the CCR?

**Respondent 3:** Completely. The relation is artificial. There is no personalization. We are a file among other

**Respondent 2:** I think that the CCR has to manage so many calls that it is complicated to have empathy, understand the extent to which it is important for us to get our problem fixed

**Respondent 1:** I agree. I am not trying to find an excuse but it is clear that their working conditions cannot encourage them to work better.

**Respondent 5:** I disagree. They are the company. As we said, this is sometimes the only way to contact the company. So they must do everything to serve us, to understand us and to solve our problem but they are not skilled

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent 5:** Sometimes, they are just unskilled or they do not have the authorization to have access to information to solve our problem. We wait, we explain our problem during 5 minutes and at the end, we are redirected. This is so frustrating.

**Moderator:** We will discuss about frustration later. If I sum up, one of the call center characteristics is also a lack of personalization, empathy and skills

**Respondent 4:** Yes, it is. The CCR I had on the phone understood my problem, and offered me to send me other CDs. I wanted more but she was not able to do that. So she transferred me to someone else but I had to wait

**Respondent 1:** Me, it has been such a long time. My insurance company told me each time that information is missing, I never have the same representative on the phone and I am now file #123. There is no empathy, there is no personalization. It became to be frustrating.

**Moderator:** So. Let's talk about your feelings. How did you feel? Why?

**Respondent 7:** I had a hard time. I have waited 30 minutes before reaching someone. She did not speak French very well so I spent a lot of time explaining my problem. At the end, we found a solution and it works. I was relieved because a solution was found after the first call. It was difficult but it was solved.

**Respondent 2:** I agree. It was the same thing for me. The most important thing is to get the problem fixed. When I called, the representative told me that the problem came from my bank agency and that it was solved. I was so relieved. It was not my fault and a solution has been found.

**Respondent 5:** Whatever the experience, when they found a solution, we feel relieved

**Moderator:** Do you all agree? Did you also feel relief or any other feelings?

**Respondent 5:** No, I rather felt frustration

**Moderator:** Any other?

**All:** No

**Respondent 1:** Euh yes actually

**Moderator:** Can you explain ?

**Respondent 1:** I feel frustrated because each time I call, I have all the information and I am sure I will solve my problem. But each time, there is something wrong. The information is not the right one, or I have another representative on the phone. I think I can't make it. So, before my last call, I threatened them telling them I will send a letter to "60 millions de consommateurs » and when I called the last time, I had the manager on the phone.

**All:** *Laughs*

**Respondent 1:** Anyway, I was frustrated and after relieved because after X phone calls, they will manage my problem and they will reimburse me. I think we go through several emotional steps.

**Respondent 5:** It is exactly the same for me and this is my third call. I will do like you, threaten them. I am frustrated too because they did not meet my expectations.

**Respondent 4:** I felt the same thing but for different reasons. The representative did not solve my problem entirely. He was competent for a part of my problem so I was a little bit frustrated because the problem was not solved entirely.

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent 4:** As I said. The person could send me other CDs but I had to wait to have more.

**Respondent 3:** I also felt frustration because there were technical problems at the call center. The representative could not access to my personal background so he could not provide me an answer. I lost my time and money without any positive issue. It was a very frustrating situation. I have to call back but I already know I will be irritated. And there is also a kind of powerlessness

**Moderator:** Powerlessness? What do you mean?

**Respondent 3:** I felt like I had no control. The call center is the only way to find a solution today. We depend on the representative. It is annoying. That sort of thing gets me beside myself, mad with rage, I could go into conflict, like in a punch-up'

**Respondent 1:** Yes, the situation is in someone hands. We have no power and we cannot do anything, we wait, call back while hoping interacting with a skilled representative

**Moderator:** Right, would you like to add something?

**All:** No

**Respondent 7:** I felt good sharing my experience and see that we are not alone

**Respondent 4:** Yeah, that is true

**Moderator:** Well, thank you very much. It will be of a great help. See you soon.

**Appendix 4. Study 1b. The interview guideline**

I want to thank you for taking the time with me today. I am Aude Rychalski and I would like to discuss with you about your recent experience with a call center. This is the main theme of my research. The interview should last less than one hour and a half. The session will be recorded since I do not want to miss or forget any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential.

Do you have any questions? Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Number	Gender	Age

1. Can you describe your last (most recent) experience with a call center ? Who did you call and why?
2. How did you feel during the call? Why?
3. Did you feel some kind of frustration? Why? Can you explain?
4. Did you feel powerlessness? Why? Can you explain?
5. Did you have a feeling of relief? Can you explain?
6. Is there anything more you would like to add?

Thank you for your time

Appendix 5. Study 1b. Transcripts of the 3 selected in-depth interviews

Study 1b. In-depth interview1 – Transcript in French

Je tenais à te remercier pour avoir accepté de participer à cet échange aujourd’hui. J’aimerais que l’on discute ensemble de ta dernière expérience avec un centre d’appels dans les télécommunications. Il s’agit du thème principal de mes recherches. L’entretien ne devrait pas durer plus d’1h30. Cet échange sera enregistré pour retranscription et afin de ne rater aucun commentaire. Bien évidemment, tes réponses resteront anonymes et confidentielles.

Number	Gender	Age
1	Male	56

**Modératrice: Peux-tu me décrire ton expérience la plus récente avec un centre d’appels? Qui as-tu appelé et pourquoi ?**

**Répondant :** Hé bien, c’était la semaine dernière. J’ai contacté *Nom de l’entreprise* pour un problème de connexion. Je n’avais plus accès à Internet. J’ai d’abord demandé à mon fils de regarder parce qu’il s’y connaît mieux mais il n’a pas trouvé la raison pour laquelle cela ne fonctionnait pas. J’ai donc décidé de les contacter

**Modératrice : Très bien. Peux-tu me détailler l’échange avec ton interlocuteur ?**

**Répondant :** Hé bien, cela a été assez houleux

**Modératrice : C’est-à-dire ?**

**Répondant :** Déjà avant d’appeler, j’étais stressé. Je n’avais pas de connexion depuis un bon moment et cela devenait urgent. Ensuite, quand on doit appeler un centre d’appels, on sait qu’on va devoir attendre. J’ai dû attendre au moins 20 minutes avant d’entrer en contact avec quelqu’un. Je n’ai pas abandonné parce qu’il fallait vraiment que j’arrive à résoudre ce problème. Donc, le stress monte ainsi que l’énervement. Ca veut dire qu’avant même d’avoir quelqu’un, j’étais déjà bien remonté. Ensuite, une fois que j’ai une personne au téléphone, j’ai dû lui expliquer mon problème sauf que c’était simple, je n’avais plus de connexion donc pour moi, c’était très clair et cela allait vite être réglé. Cela démarre bien, la personne m’écoute, reformule mon problème et me pose des questions précises sur la manière dont j’avais perdu la connexion, depuis combien de temps...

**Modératrice : OK, continue**

**Répondant :** Hé bien en fait, c’est là que cela se complique.

**Modératrice : Pourquoi ?**

**Répondant :** Hé bien, cet appel ne m’a pas permis de régler mon problème. Depuis, c’est réglé mais j’ai dû appeler 3 fois avant que l’on trouve la solution.

**Modératrice : Peux-tu revenir sur ce premier appel, c’est ce qui m’intéresse, que s’est-il passé ?**

**Répondant :** En fait, l'employé a fait mine de comprendre en me posant des questions mais il m'a baladé. Il était incompétent et ne trouvait pas l'origine du problème. Il m'a donc fait faire des choses sur ma connexion à distance, j'ai éteint la box, je l'ai rallumée, cela ne fonctionnait pas. J'ai passé plus de 45 minutes au téléphone avec lui et rien de ce qu'il disait ne fonctionnait.

**Modératrice :** Quelles émotions as-tu ressenti ?

**Répondant :** Plein

**Modératrice :** A savoir ?

**Répondant :** J'étais frustré. Mon problème était urgent pour moi et je savais d'avance que j'allais y passer du temps. C'est bien connu avec les centres d'appels. J'ai appelé le service qui est censé me fournir une réponse mais je n'ai pas la réponse. Je suis l'ensemble du processus, je joue le jeu, j'attends, j'écoute la musique mais à la fin, la personne n'est pas la bonne et je perds mon temps. L'employé n'a rien compris, il était incompétent et je voulais raccrocher. Avant de téléphoner, je me suis dit 'ok, j'aurai la solution' et au final, quand je raccroche, je suis frustré, on n'a pas pu répondre à ma demande. Pour moi, la solution était simple mais apparemment non. C'est quand même dingue. On doit appeler un numéro, on est censé être en relation avec des personnes compétentes mais le problème en fait c'est qu'il me fallait un technicien mais pas un commercial et celui que j'ai eu au téléphone n'était pas la bonne personne. Ce n'est pas de sa faute mais au lieu de me faire perdre mon temps, elle aurait pu d'office me mettre en relation avec le bon interlocuteur, un technicien. Au lieu de cela, ils te font croire qu'ils peuvent gérer alors que ce n'est pas le cas.

**Modératrice :** Est-ce que tu as ressenti d'autres émotions ?

**Répondant :** Oui, de la surprise vis-à-vis de la pub, on s'attend à un service de qualité et en fait, il n'y a rien derrière. Mais j'aurai dû me méfier car des amis à moi ont aussi eu des soucis. Pourquoi n'ont-ils pas agi au lieu de me faire poireauter ? Je ne comprendrai jamais. Et puis, on ne peut rien y faire, on est dépendant.

**Modératrice :** Est-ce que tu parlerais d'un sentiment d'impuissance ?

**Répondant :** Oui, il y a de cela. On dépend de quelqu'un pour résoudre notre problème – et puis moi, je suis nul en informatique – et on ne contrôle rien. Je déteste quand je ne contrôle pas les choses. C'est le désert total et je ne peux rien y faire sauf attendre que quelqu'un veuille bien me répondre. Je suis abonné chez eux depuis 8 ans, on s'attend quand même à être bien traité mais en fait, cela n'a rien à voir.

**Modératrice :** Qu'est-ce que tu veux dire ?

**Répondant :** En étant fidèle à une entreprise depuis plus de 8 ans et vu le marché et la concurrence, on pourrait s'attendre à être mieux traité mais en fait je ne pense pas qu'ils fassent vraiment attention à cela

**Modératrice :** OK ! On va revenir sur les émotions. Est-ce que tu as ressenti d'autres émotions, positives ou négatives ?

**Répondant :** Positives, non, ça c'est sûr. Je pourrai en revanche parler d'une sorte de lassitude. Je me suis senti comme fatigué de toujours répéter les mêmes choses. J'étais très motivé avant l'appel parce que pour moi, ce problème est simple à résoudre surtout pour



des pros en informatique. Et en fait au fur et à mesure de l'appel, je me suis comme découragé, mes forces diminuaient en fait. Ca demande beaucoup d'énergie je trouve : on attend, on explique, j'ai fait les manipulations demandées et à distance, ce n'est pas facile et au final, il ne se passe rien. Mon problème n'est pas résolu au bout d'un appel

**Modératrice : Oui, je comprends ce que tu veux dire. C'est comme si tu t'usais**

**Répondant :** Oui, c'est un peu ça. Alors, après, cela allait mieux parce que j'ai pu régler mon problème mais sur cette expérience, ça m'a bouffé. Heureusement cela n'a pas duré mais ça demande du temps, de l'énergie, de la patience.

**Modératrice : Mieux, c'est-à-dire ?**

**Répondant :** Comme je l'ai dit, j'ai dû appeler 3 fois avant que mon problème ne soit résolu. La première fois, la personne était incompétente, la deuxième fois, ils m'ont raccroché au nez.

**Modératrice : Ah bon ?**

**Répondant :** Hé oui, j'ai patienté pendant 10 minutes avant de parler à quelqu'un, l'employé me demande mes coordonnées, me dit qu'il accède à mon dossier et là en fait il me raccroche au nez

**Modératrice : Ca fait toujours plaisir ?**

**Répondant :** Ah ça, je peux te dire que j'étais hyper irrité et ça montait. J'étais en colère... Bref, je ne me décourage pas et je téléphone une troisième fois. Enfin, ce n'était pas d'affilée, j'ai quand même laissé passer quelques jours histoire de baisser un peu la pression et de prendre du recul. Bref, à mon 3<sup>ème</sup> appel, je n'attends que (signe des guillemets) 5 minutes et là, je tombe sur une personne qui parle bien, qui comprend ce que je dis, que je comprends et qui a réglé mon problème en 5 minutes...

**Modératrice : Et tu t'es senti comment à ce moment ?**

**Répondant :** Bah satisfait. J'ai enfin eu ce que je voulais et en plus la personne était charmante au téléphone

**Modératrice : Mais si on parlait plus dans le registre de l'émotionnel, tu dirais que tu as ressenti quoi comme émotion à ce moment précis ?**

**Répondant :** Bah, j'étais content parce que j'avais enfin une solution et en plus ça s'est bien passé. La personne a été sympa au téléphone et a réglé mon problème.

**Modératrice : Très bien. Est-ce que tu as des éléments à rajouter ?**

**Répondant :** Non, je ne vois pas. Il y a tellement de choses à dire sur les centres d'appels. Bon courage en tout cas.

**Modératrice : Merci beaucoup. A bientôt.**

**Study 1b. In-depth interview7 – Transcript in French**

Je tenais à te remercier pour avoir accepté de participer à cet échange aujourd’hui. J’aimerais que l’on discute ensemble de ta dernière expérience avec un centre d’appels dans les télécommunications. Il s’agit du thème principal de mes recherches. L’entretien ne devrait pas durer plus d’1h30. Cet échange sera enregistré pour retranscription et afin de ne rater aucun commentaire. Bien évidemment, tes réponses resteront anonymes et confidentielles.

Number	Gender	Age
7	Female	27

**Modérateur: Peux-tu me décrire ton expérience la plus récente avec un centre d’appels? Qui as-tus appelé et pourquoi ?**

**Répondant :** Hé bien j’ai appelé *Nom de l’entreprise* parce qu’il n’avait pas pris en compte mon changement d’adresse pour ma connexion Internet. Je les ai appelés il y a deux semaines. Je te raconte en détail ?

**Modérateur : Oui, s’il te plaît**

**Répondant :** Donc j’ai déménagé en Août et on voulait garder notre abonnement Internet chez *Nom de l’entreprise*. Je les ai contactés une première fois au mois de juin pour savoir quelle démarche je devais effectuer pour avoir le suivi de la ligne pour la box. Je m’y suis prise en avance parce qu’il était impératif qu’on ait une connexion à notre arrivée dans la maison. Donc déjà, j’ai attendu des plombes alors que finalement j’aurai pu aller sur Internet ou en magasin mais bon, j’ai pensé directement à téléphoner et je voulais avoir des conseils. Donc, j’ai dû attendre au moins 10 minutes avant d’avoir une personne. Je lui donne les renseignements et j’explique la raison de mon appel. Là, la personne me dit qu’elle n’est pas en charge de ce genre de choses donc elle me remet en attente et j’attends encore 10 minutes. Bref, j’arrive à avoir la bonne personne qui m’explique qu’elle peut enregistrer ma demande. Je lui donne donc toutes les informations, la nouvelle adresse, la date à partir de laquelle elle peut résilier notre ancienne adresse et démarrer pour noter nouvelle adresse. Ca n’a pas pris plus de 5 minutes.

**Modérateur : OK, donc ça c’était il y a quelques mois mais tu as dit que tu les appelées il y a 15 jours, c’était pour la même chose.**

**Répondant :** Oui, parce qu’ils n’ont toujours pas transféré la ligne

**Modérateur : Sérieusement ? Mais cela fait un mois que tu as déménagé ?**

**Répondant :** Hé oui. En fait, quand on est arrivé et qu’on a emménagé et voulu installer la box, cela n’a pas fonctionné. Bon après, on est parti en vacances et j’ai rappelé en septembre. A nouveau j’attends, je ne tombe pas sur la bonne personne, je redonne mes informations personnelles, j’explique à nouveau le problème et heureusement j’avais noté tout ce que j’avais fait depuis juin. Quand je tombe sur la bonne personne, celle-ci me dit qu’ils ne gèrent pas cela par téléphone, qu’il faut faire un courrier en décrivant ma

demande. Donc déjà, deux informations différentes. Je lui demande donc combien de temps ça va prendre parce qu'en attendant, je continue de payer

**Modérateur : Ah oui**

**Répondant :** Bah oui puisque mon contrat n'est pas résilié et donc les nouveaux locataires de mon ancien appartement bénéficie d'une connexion gratuite. Bref, elle me répond qu'à réception du courrier, cela ne devrait pas prendre plus de 15 jours. Donc, je fais le courrier, je l'envoie dans les deux jours, je reçois l'accusé de réception et au bout de 15 jours, rien ne se passe et donc là je rappelle et c'était ce fameux coup de téléphone d'il y a 15 jours.

**Modérateur : Que se passe-t-il ?**

**Répondant :** Hé bien, il n'y a aucune trace de mon courrier et donc de ma demande

**Modérateur : Donc c'est comme si depuis juin, tu n'avais rien fait ?**

**Répondant :** Exactement. Je ne te raconte pas à quel point je suis énervée et mon mari est très très énervé.

**Modérateur : J'imagine. Mais si on se concentre sur ce dernier appel. Quelles sont les émotions que tu as ressenties?**

**Répondant :** Déjà, à la base, je suis énervée, ça fait des mois que ça traîne, on ne me donne pas les bonnes informations, je répète toujours la même chose, j'attends, je fais des courriers, je paye une connexion à laquelle je n'ai pas accès.

**Modérateur : Mais sur cet appel précisément**

**Répondant :** De la colère, je n'en peux plus. C'est kafkaïen. Ça part dans les sens, c'est du grand n'importe quoi, il n'y a aucun suivi de dossier. Au bout de la deuxième fois, ils auraient pu s'assurer que c'était réglé. J'ai fait une demande mais il n'y a pas de suite et à chaque fois, c'est un interlocuteur différent donc on reprend tout depuis le début. Il y a des traces de mes appels mais rien concernant mes démarches de courrier. Ça me bouffe une énergie, je m'impatiente et j'en ai marre. C'est comme quand tu te mets à fond dans un projet et rien n'avance, il y a de quoi être découragée.

**Modérateur : Donc, tu ressens une forme de découragement ?**

**Répondant :** Oui, c'est ça. Je m'investis dans quelque chose et il n'y a aucun résultat. Ce n'est pas comme s'il se passait quelque chose, là, il ne se passe rien. Donc, je me suis mise dans une colère folle auprès de mon dernier interlocuteur, le pauvre, il a pris pour tout le monde mais là, je n'en peux plus, ce n'est pas normal. Je les ai menacés d'écrire à '60 millions de consommateurs', j'ai crié, j'étais énervée

**Modérateur : Et comment il a réagi ?**

**Répondant :** Bien en fait même s'il n'avait aucune réponse à me fournir. Lui-même ne savait pas comment on en est arrivé là. Et puis le problème c'est que je peux continuer à appeler et à envoyer des courriers, cela ne marche pas alors je fais quoi moi ? C'est eux qui ont la solution, moi je suis pieds et poings liés

**Modérateur : C'est-à-dire ?**

**Répondant :** Il n'y a qu'eux qui peuvent résoudre mon problème, je ne peux pas déplacer la connexion moi-même. Je ne peux rien faire si ce n'est faire les démarches et j'estime que j'en ai assez fait.

**Modérateur :** Est-ce qu'on peut parler d'impuissance ?

**Répondant :** Complètement. Là, je ne peux rien faire de plus. Mon problème n'est pas résolu et je ne peux rien y faire, cela dépend de *Nom de l'entreprise*. Alors, je peux accélérer le processus en les menaçant de contacter un organisme de consommation ou en résiliant mon contrat mais ce n'est pas le but et moi, je veux régler mon problème qui était tout simplement de transférer ma ligne Internet.

**Modérateur :** Mais c'est résolu aujourd'hui ?

**Répondant :** Pas vraiment mais la dernière personne a pris les choses en main. Elle a enregistré ma demande et a proposé de me recontacter pour voir si j'ai récupéré ma connexion et je ne l'ai toujours pas récupérée

**Modérateur :** Est-ce que tu as ressenti de la frustration à un moment ? Pourquoi ?  
Peux-tu détailler ?

**Répondant :** Oh oui, complètement, j'ai suivi les consignes et le résultat n'est pas probant. Il y a de quoi être frustré, la situation a été bloquée. On n'a pas tenu compte de ma demande qui était simple je pense. Cela doit être quelque chose qu'ils font tous les jours.

**Modérateur.** Très bien. Et lors de ce dernier appel, est-ce que tu as ressenti du soulagement à un moment ? Pourquoi ? Peux-tu détailler ?

**Répondant :** Pas vraiment du soulagement. J'étais un peu plus calme parce que la dernière personne m'a écoutée, a été très gentille et je sentais qu'elle avait envie de m'aider. Elle a bien compris que je n'en pouvais plus. De l'apaisement parce qu'elle s'est proposée d'elle-même de me recontacter. Là, je me suis dit 'on avance, il va y avoir un suivi et j'ai un nom', parce que je lui avais demandé son nom si jamais il y avait encore un souci. Cela relève plus d'une sorte de calme, je me suis un peu apaisée. Je serai soulagée quand j'aurai récupéré ma connexion.

**Modérateur :** Très bien. Est-ce que tu as des éléments à ajouter ?

**Répondant :** Non, juste que cela a été une sacrée péripétie, je ne m'attendais pas du tout à cela d'autant que j'avais anticipé.

**Study 1b. In-depth interview19 – Transcript in French**

Je tenais à te remercier pour avoir accepté de participer à cet échange aujourd'hui. J'aimerais que l'on discute ensemble de ta dernière expérience avec un centre d'appels dans les télécommunications. Il s'agit du thème principal de mes recherches. L'entretien ne devrait pas durer plus d'1h30. Cet échange sera enregistré pour retranscription et afin de ne rater aucun commentaire. Bien évidemment, tes réponses resteront anonymes et confidentielles.

Number	Gender	Age
19	Female	56

**Modératrice: Peux-tu-vous me décrire ton expérience la plus récente avec un centre d'appels? Qui avez-vous appelé et pourquoi ?**

**Répondant :** Hé bien, j'ai une expérience très positive et c'est plutôt rare avec les centres d'appels.

**Modératrice : Tu peux détailler ?**

**Répondant :** Oui, j'avais un problème avec ma box depuis quelques jours donc j'ai contacté *Nom de l'entreprise*. Ma connexion Internet ne fonctionnait plus et je n'avais plus de télé. J'appréhendais un peu la situation parce que généralement, c'est compliqué d'appeler un centre d'appels.

**Modératrice : Pourquoi ?**

**Répondant :** Le temps d'attente, on n'est pas sûr de joindre la bonne personne, on n'est pas sûr d'obtenir une réponse claire... Et dans mon cas, je savais qu'il allait y avoir des manip à faire sur la box et à distance, c'est pas facile. C'est ennuyant d'attendre tout le temps et parfois les gens ont un tel accent que c'est compliqué de les comprendre.

**Modératrice : Ca sent le vécu !**

**Répondant :** Pour la box, non, c'est la première fois que cela m'arrive, pour le reste, ça se passe souvent comme ça. Cela m'était arrivé pour une commande que j'avais faite sur Internet, il avait oublié un article et le correspondant avait un tel accent que je n'ai rien compris. J'avais attendu 20 minutes avant d'avoir quelqu'un au téléphone. Et quand il a parlé, j'essayé de deviner mais au bout de 5 minutes, je lui ai dit que je ne le comprenais pas et lui ai demandé de me passer quelqu'un que je pourrais mieux comprendre.

**Modératrice : Comment a-t-il réagi ?**

**Répondant :** Il l'a plutôt bien pris et a compris. J'ai donc été à nouveau en attente pendant 5 bonnes minutes mais j'ai parlé ensuite à quelqu'un qui parlait bien français et que je comprenais. Mais pour la connexion internet, j'en ai assez discuté avec des amis qui m'ont expliqué leur mésaventure. Il faut faire des manipulations à distance sur la box, voir les connexions entre la box et l'ordinateur... Moi, ça me stresse un peu en avance

**Modératrice : Pourquoi ?**

**Répondant :** Parce que je ne m'y connais pas plus que cela et qu'avec leur langage technique, on est vite dépassé. Ils ont souvent du mal à se mettre à notre niveau et utilisent des jargons inconnus

**Modératrice : Ca c'est bien vrai. OK et si on revenait à l'appel, combien de temps as-tu attendu ?**

**Répondant :** J'ai été mis en attente pendant au moins 15 minutes. Mais ça valait le coup !

**Modératrice : Ah oui ?**

**Répondant :** Je suis tombé sur une dame très sympa et qui a trouvé la solution. Mais surtout, elle a été de bons conseils et est allée plus loin que le problème.

**Modératrice : C'est-à-dire ?**

**Répondant :** Elle m'a donné des conseils pour le futur. Je t'explique. Elle décroche, je lui donne mon numéro de client et je lui explique mon problème en lui disant que je n'ai plus

de connexion Internet. Et en fait, c'était hyper simple. Moi, quand j'ai vu que je n'avais plus de connexion Internet, j'ai regardé sur mon ordinateur. J'ai vu que la box clignotait donc je ne me suis pas dit que c'était la box, je pensais que c'était entre la box et l'ordinateur. Donc, elle me pose une première question à savoir 'depuis quand, je n'ai plus Internet et la télé', je lui réponds 1 semaine mais je n'avais pas le temps de téléphoner avant. Elle me pose une 2<sup>ème</sup> question très claire qui est 'est-ce que vous avez essayé de débrancher et rebrancher la box ?'. Quand elle me dit ça, je rigole en me disant que cela ne peut pas être la cause. Donc je le fais et là ça fonctionne. Je me suis retrouvé bête au téléphone et elle s'en est rendue compte. En fait, il faut savoir que *Nom de l'entreprise* fait des mises à jour régulières et donc qu'il faut débrancher et rallumer la box pour bénéficier de mises à jour, il faut le faire une fois par mois.

**Modératrice : Donc en fait, tu as passé plus de temps à attendre qu'à solutionner ton problème ?**

**Répondant :** Hé bien oui mais bon, je ne pouvais pas deviner. C'est vrai que c'est plutôt rageant avec le recul mais bon, je n'avais pas le choix. En revanche, si cela m'arrive à nouveau, je ferai cette manipulation et si cela marche, tant mieux. Je gagnerai du temps mais de toute façon, il faut que je le fasse tous les mois.

**Modératrice : Quelles sont les émotions que tu as ressenties pendant cet appel ?**

**Répondant :** J'étais content et soulagé principalement. Content parce que j'ai eu une personne gentille au téléphone, qui a pris le temps de résoudre le problème et surtout de me donner des informations complémentaires sur comment fonctionne une box. J'étais soulagé parce que mon problème était résolu et surtout rapidement. Bon après, cela aurait pu être pire comme problème. Dans mon cas, c'était assez simple mais la solution a été trouvée. J'ai récupéré Internet et la télé en un seul appel téléphonique et en moins de disons 25 minutes.

**Modératrice : Est-ce que tu as ressenti d'autres émotions ?**

**Répondant :** Non, je ne pense pas. En tout cas, ce n'était que positif.

**Modératrice : Est-ce que tu as des éléments à rajouter ?**

**Répondant :** Non, j'ai répondu comme je le voulais.

**Modératrice : OK, hé bien merci alors et à bientôt.**



Appendix 6. Study 1b. Translations of the 3 selected in-depth interviews in English

Study 1b. In-depth interview 1 – Translation of the Transcript in English

I want to thank you for taking the time with me today. I am Aude Rychalski and I would like to discuss with you about your recent experience with a call center. This is the main theme of my research. The interview should last less than one hour and a half. The session will be recorded since I do not want to miss or forget any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential.

Number	Gender	Age
1	Male	56

**Moderator:** Can you describe your last (most recent) experience with a call center? Who did you call and why?

**Respondent:** Well it was last week. I called Company Name because I have no Internet. I asked my son to have a look because he better knows this kind of thing but he did not find the reason why I had no Internet access. So I decided to contact them

**Moderator:** Ok. Can you provide details on the phone call?

**Respondent:** Well, it was like a storm

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent:** Before the call, I was stressed. I had no Internet access for a while and it was urgent. Then, when you have to call a call center, you know you will have to wait. I waited at least 20 minutes before reaching someone. I did not give up because I really needed to solve this problem. So I am getting stressed and irritated. This before talking to someone, I was irritated. Then, once I had someone I had to explain my problem but it was simple, my Internet access did not work. To me, it was clear, and it would be solved rapidly. So it starts well, the representative listens to me, reformulate my problem and ask me specific questions on the way I lost the Internet, how long...

**Moderator:** OK, go on

**Respondent:** Now, it starts being complicated

**Moderator:** Why?

**Respondent:** After this call I did not solve my problem. It is solved now but I had to call 3 times before having a solution

**Moderator:** Can you come back to the first call, what happened?

**Respondent:** The representative pretended to understand as he kept asking me questions but he was incompetent and could not find the reason why I had no internet connection. I had to make things, I turned the bow off, I turned it on but it did not work. I spent more than 45 minutes on the phone and nothing worked.

**Moderator:** Did you have any feelings?



**Respondent:** Plenty

**Moderator:** Which are ?

**Respondent:** I was frustrated. It was an urgent situation and I knew I would spent time on it. Call centers are known for that. I called the service which is supposed to help me and provide an answer but I had no answer. I follow the whole process, I play the game, I wait, I listen to the music but finally the CCR is not the right person and I waste my time. The representative did not understand anything. He was incompetent and I wanted to hang up.

Before the call, I told myself 'OK, I will have the solution' and finally when I hang up, I am frustrated, no one solved my problem. For me, the solution was simple but actually it was not. That's crazy. You have to dial a number, we are supposed to talk to skilled representatives but the problem is that what I needed was a technician but the individual I had on the phone was a salesman so I talked to the wrong individual. It is not his fault but instead of wasting my time, he could have redirected my call with a technician. Instead they let you believe that they can manage.

**Moderator:** Did you feel other emotions?

**Respondent:** You are expecting a certain level of quality but it is not the case. I should have paid attention when some of my friends had problems? They did not act while I was waiting, why? We can't do anything, we are dependent.

**Moderator:** Would you say that you felt some kind of powerlessness?

**Respondent:** Yes, a kind of. I depended on someone to solve my problem and I am not good at IT. You did not control the thing. I hate when I do not control things. Nothing happens and I can't do anything except waiting for someone. I subscribed to this company for 8 years. You expect to be served but it does not work this way.

**Moderator:** What do you mean ?

**Respondent:** As a loyal customer and when you see the market and competition, we expect to be better served but I think they do not care about that

**Moderator:** OK ! Let's go back to your feelings. Did you feel any other, positive or negative?

**Respondent:** Positive, no for sure. I felt like I was tired. I was weary repeating same things. I was very motivated before the call because for me it was easy to solve especially for IT experts. But as the discussion went, I felt discouraged, I had less energy. I think it requires a lot of energy. We wait, we explain, I did all the tests, it is not easy and finally, nothing happened. My problem was not solved in one call

**Moderator:** Yes, I understand what you mean. As if you were tired?

**Respondent:** Yes. Then I felt better because my problem was solved but after the first call, I was stressed. Fortunately it did not last but it requires energy, time and patience.

**Moderator:** Better ? What do you mean? ?

**Respondent:** As I said, I had to call 3 times before getting my problem solved. The first time, the representative was incompetent, the second time, they hung up

**Moderator:** Really ?

**Respondent:** Yes. I have waited for 10 minutes before reaching someone, the representative asked for my personal background, told me that he had access to my files and actually he hung up

**Moderator:** Nice !

**Respondent:** Ha, I can tell you I was very irritated and angry. I was very angry. I am not discouraged and I called a third time. Not in a raw. I have waited few days in order to be less angry and step back. On the third call, I have waited ‘only’ 5 minutes and I spoke to a very nice representative, who spoke clearly, who understood my problem and she solved it in 5 minutes

**Moderator:** How did you feel at that time?

**Respondent:** Satisfied. I finally get what I wanted and the representative was very nice

**Moderator:** But in terms of emotions, what did you feel at that time?

**Respondent:** I felt happy because they found solution and it went very well. The representative was very nice and solved my problem

**Moderator:** Fine. Would you like to add further information?

**Respondent:** No, I do not see. There are so many things to say. Good luck

**Moderator:** Thank you very much. See you soon

**Study 1b. In-depth interview7 – Translation of the Transcript in English**

I want to thank you for taking the time with me today. I am Aude Rychalski and I would like to discuss with you about your recent experience with a call center. This is the main theme of my research. The interview should last less than one hour and a half. The session will be recorded since I do not want to miss or forget any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential.

Number	Gender	Age
7	Female	27

**Moderator:** Can you describe your last (most recent) experience with a call center? Who did you call and why?

**Respondent:** I called *Company Name* because they did not transfer my Internet line to my new home. I called them 2 weeks ago. Do I explain more?

**Moderator:** Yes please

**Respondent:** I moved on in a new home last August but we wanted to keep our subscription at Company Name. I called them a first time last June to get information on the things I had to do for the transfer of the line. I did it early because it was very important to have the line once at home. I had to wait a long time and I learned later that I could have found the information on the Internet or in a store. I phoned and I wanted to get advice. I

had to spend 10 minutes before reaching someone. I gave her all the information and explain why I called. The representative told me that she was not competent for this and put me on hold. I had to spend again like 10 minutes. Finally I reached the right representative who explained that she can make it at that time. I gave her all the necessary information, the new address, the date from which she can transfer the line. It took no more than 5 minutes.

**Moderator: OK. So this was several months ago. You called them 15 days ago, why?**

**Respondent:** Yes, because they did not transfer the line.

**Moderator: Seriously? But you moved on one month ago?**

**Respondent:** Yeah! When we moved on and started to install the box, it did not work. Then, we went on holidays and I called back in September. Again, I waited, I did not talk to the right representative, I gave my personal background information, I explained the problem and hopefully I wrote all things I did so that I can easily remember things. Once I reached the right representative, she told me that they do not do it on the phone, that we must send a postal letter with an explanation. So, I had two different kinds of information. I asked her how long it would take because I was still paying.

**Moderator: Really?**

**Respondent:** Of course, they did not terminate the contract. So the new tenant in my former apartment has a free Internet access. Anyway, she asked me that once they received my letter, it would not take more than 15 days. So, I wrote the letter, sent it, I received the acknowledgment and after 15 days, nothing happened. So I called back and I am here.

**Moderator: What happened?**

**Respondent:** They could not find the letter I sent

**Moderator: So it's like you did not do anything since June?**

**Respondent:** Exactly. I am so irritated and my husband, he is very very angry

**Moderator: I can imagine. Let's concentrate on this last call. How did you feel?**

**Respondent:** I was already angry. It's been months, I do not have the right information, I always repeat things, I wait, I write letters, I pay an Internet connection I do not use

**Moderator: But if you focus on this call?**

**Respondent:** Anger. I am exhausted. It is like in Kafka book. It goes in all directions, there is no monitoring. After the second call, they could have told me it was done. I had a request but there are no after-services and each time I talk to a different representative so we start from scratch. There is evidence of my calls but nothing concerning my letter. I spent such energy, I am impatient and I fed up with this entire story. It's like working on a project for month and nothing works, I am discouraged.

**Moderator: So you felt some kind of discouragement?**

**Respondent:** Yes, that's true. I spend times and there is no result. It is not like something occurs. I was in a mad rage with the last representative I had on the phone. Poor guy... I shouted and I was very irritated.

**Moderator: How did he react?**

**Respondent:** Even though he has no information, he does not know why this happened. And I keep calling and sending mail but it does not work. So what do I do? These guys are the solution. I am bound hand and foot.

**Moderator:** What do you mean?

**Respondent:** The call center is the only way to get my problem solved. I cannot make it on my own. I can't do anything except sending letters and calling. I did enough

**Moderator:** Can we say that you feel 'powerlessness'?

**Respondent:** Totally. I cannot do more. My problem is not solved and I depend on the *Company Name*. So I can speed up the process with threats or by terminating the subscription but this is not the aim. I want to solve my problem which was a simple one.

**Moderator:** Is your problem solved?

**Respondent:** Not really, the last representative I had on the phone is in charge of the problem. She registered my request and suggested to call me in one week to check if I get it back

**Moderator:** Did you feel some kind of frustration?

**Respondent:** Oh yes! Totally! I followed the instructions but there is no result. I have to be frustrated. The situation has been blocked. Nobody cares about my simple problem. This is a daily task.

**Moderator:** OK. And did you feel some kind of relief?

**Respondent:** Not really. I felt better and I calmed down. The last representative listened to me, she was very nice and I felt she wanted to help me. She understood I was discouraged. I felt appeasement because she said she will call me back. I told myself that we were on the right track and I asked for her name in case. I felt calm. I will felt relieved when I will have my internet connection

**Moderator:** Fine. Would you like to add further information?

**Respondent:** No, just that it was a long and difficult episode. I did not expect this at all

**Moderator:** OK. Thank you very much for sharing information with me.

**Study 1b. In-depth interview19 – Translation of the Transcript in English**

I want to thank you for taking the time with me today. I am Aude Rychalski and I would like to discuss with you about your recent experience with a call center. This is the main theme of my research. The interview should last less than one hour and a half. The session will be recorded since I do not want to miss or forget any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential.

Number	Gender	Age
19	Female	56

**Moderator:** Can you describe your last (most recent) experience with a call center?  
Who did you call and why?

**Respondent:** Well, I had a very positive experience and it is rather rare with a call center

**Moderator:** Can you explain ?

**Respondent:** I had a problem with my box for some days so I called *Company Name*. My Internet connection did not work and I had no TV. I was a bit upset because usually it is difficult to call a call center

**Moderator:** Why ?

**Respondent:** The wait length. We are not sure to reach someone, to get a clear and relevant answer. In my case, I knew there will be some stuff to do with the box, from a distance, it is not easy. It is tiring to wait each time and sometimes people have such a bad accent, it is very complicated to understand them

**Moderator:** You lived it !

**Respondent:** Not for the box, this is the first time this happened but it often happens this way. It happened to me when I made an order on the Internet. They forgot to send me one item and the representative had such an accent, I did not understand anything. I have waited 20 minutes before talking to him. When he spoke, I was trying to guess what he was saying but after 5 minutes, I told him I could not understand and ask him to redirect the call

**Moderator:** How did he react ?

**Respondent:** Rather cool. I had to wait during 5 minutes again. But I talked to someone who spoke good French I understood. For the Internet connection, I have talked with some of my friends about the Internet connection and we were sharing our experience. You have to do tests, to check connection between the Internet and the computer. I was a bit stressed.

**Moderator:** Why ?

**Respondent:** Because I am not good and when they use technical language, it is difficult to follow. They often struggle to get to our level and use unknown jargons

**Moderator:** That is true. Let's talk about the phone call, how long did you wait?

**Respondent:** 15 minutes, more or less. But J'ai été mis en attente pendant au moins 15 minutes. It was worth.

**Moderator:** Really ?

**Respondent:** I talked to such a really nice woman who found the solution. She gave me valuable advice. She went beyond my problem and anticipated my questions

**Moderator:** What do you mean ?

**Respondent:** She gave advice for future. I explain: She answered to the phone, I gave her my account number and discussed about my problem saying that I have no Internet connection. Actually, it was simple. When I realized I had no Internet connection anymore, I looked at my computer. I saw the light flashed on the box so I told myself it was not the box. I thought it was something about the computer and the box. She asked me since when

I did not have the Internet and TV. I told her 'one week'. The second question was 'have you tried plugging and unplugging the box?'. As I did not do it, I do and it works. I felt stupid on the phone and she noticed it. We have to know that *Company Name* make regular updates so we have to plug and unplug the box on a regular basis like once a month.

**Moderator:** So you spent more time waiting?

**Respondent:** Well yes actually but I could not guess. It is rather annoying but I had no choice. If it happens again, I will do this test and it works, that's fine. I will save time.

**Moderator:** How did you feel during the call?

**Respondent:** I was mainly happy and relieved. Happy because I had a nice representative on the phone and I really appreciate she gave me further information. I was relieved because my problem was rapidly solved. In my case, it was simple. I get the internet in one call and in less than 25 minutes

**Moderator:** Did you have other feelings?

**Respondent:** No, I don't think so. Everything was good

**Moderator:** Would you like to provide further information?

**Respondent:** No I said what I wanted to say.

**Moderator:** OK, well, thank you very much.

## Appendix 7. Study 2b. The questionnaire

Hello,

You recently contacted the XXXX support line. We would very much appreciate your feedback on this call. Today, we would like to get information about the interaction with our service provider.

The following questions related **only** on this service experience

1. This questionnaire is completely anonymous and confidential
2. There is no right or wrong answers
3. Please answer all questions with the utmost sincerity. Thank you very much for your participation

### Before the phone call

1. Why did you call? (please check only one answer)
  - ☐ Technical assistance (after-sales service, wifi, the Internet)
  - ☐ Line activation and logistics (line wiring, delivery)
  - ☐ Account management (billing, payment, service modifications)
  - ☐ Claims
  - ☐ Ask for information

### During the phone call

Let's talk about the waiting time

2. According to you, how long (in minutes) do you think you waited on hold?
  - ☐ Less than one minute
  - ☐ From 1 to 3 minutes
  - ☐ From 3 to 5 minutes
  - ☐ More than 5 minutes
3. Please describe your feelings concerning the waiting time you have faced. Please use the 1 – 5 scales. Giving a higher mark indicates your opinion that the word stated on the right-hand side of the scale is a better description of your feelings concerning your wait on the phone



	1	2	3	4	5	
Annoying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pleasant
Boring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Varied
Unsatisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Satisfactory
Irritating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not irritating
Long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Short
Unacceptable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acceptable

Let’s talk about your satisfaction with the service / interaction with the CCR

4. Overall, how close did the phone conversation come up to your expectations?

Much lower than expected	Lower than expected	As expected	Higher than expected	Much higher than expected
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Considering everything, how satisfied are you with the phone conversation?

Very unsatisfied	Dissatisfied	Moderately satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please describe the intensity of feelings you had during the phone call. Please use the 1-5 scales. Please note that the scale has been reversed going from 1 = extremely to 5 = Not at all

	Extremely	A lot	Moderately	A little	Not at all
Happy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frustrated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Angry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Powerlessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discouraged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**After the phone call**

7. The following set of statements is related to your opinions about your loyalty to the company. In each set, please show the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. If you strongly agree, please check the box on the right-hand side of the scale

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree moderately	Agree	Strongly agree
I am likely to say positive things about this company to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this company to someone who seeks my advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would encourage friends and relatives to do business with this company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consider this company my first choice to buy the appropriate services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am likely to do more business with the company in the next few years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. If you had the choice, which alternative to the phone call would you have used to reach the company

☐ Retail / face-to-face ☐ Email ☐ Company Internet website ☐ Chat ☐ Postal letter

The following questions will address other themes than your experience with the CCR. Please answer with the utmost sincerity.

9. The following set of statements is related to your personality traits. In each set, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. If you strongly agree, please check the box on the right-hand side of the scale

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree moderately	Agree	Strongly agree
I am the life of the party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't talk a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel comfortable around people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I keep in the background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I start conversations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have little to say	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I talk to a lot of different people at parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't like to draw attention to myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't mind being the centre of attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am quiet around strangers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree moderately	Agree	Strongly agree
I am always prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I leave my belongings around	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I pay attention to details	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I make a mess of things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get chores done right away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often forget to put things back in their proper place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like orders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I shirk my duties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow a schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am exacting in my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree moderately	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel little concern for others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am interested in people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I sympathize with others' feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not interested in other people's problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a soft heart	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not really interested in others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take time out for others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel others emotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I make people feel at ease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree moderately	Agree	Strongly agree
I get stressed out easily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am relaxed most of the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I worry about things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I seldom feel blue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am easily disturbed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get upset easily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I change my mood a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have frequent mood swings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get irritated easily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Personal background

Please check the appropriate box

10. Your gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
11. Your age: ☐ Less than 25 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65 or over
12. Your educational background: ☐ Certificate ☐ College degree ☐ BAC-BAC+3 ☐ BAC+3-BAC+5 ☐ Above BAC+5
13. Your professional background: ☐ Worker ☐ Employee ☐ Middle manager ☐ Manager and senior intellectual ☐ Artisan ☐ Farmer ☐ Retired ☐ Other, without employment

## Appendix 8. Study 3. The moderator's instructions guide

The objective of the focus group is threefold:

1. To discover the antecedents of negative customer emotions in a call center encounter,
2. To assess the relationship between anger and frustration emotions on the one hand and customer satisfaction and loyalty on the other.
3. To explore whether emotional regulation moderates the relationship between the variables

### Procedure

In groups of 3 you will recruit 4 or 5 volunteers to participate in a focus group in order to answer IQ1-3 (below). **Student 1** will moderate the discussion, asking the participants to relate previous experiences with call centers according to a moderator's outline discussed in class during session 3. **Student 2** will record, observe and take notes. **Student 3** will be in charge of logistics

**All three students** should divide up the task of transcribing word for word the sound or video recording of the focus group on a WORD DOCUMENT, taking care to note: 1. the demographic details of the participants; 2. the time and place of the focus group and 3. the identity of each paragraph of spoken text by name, initials or other identifier. Date for final submission MIDDAY 12 p.m. 14 October 2013 for Monday group and 16 October Wednesday group. Upload onto google apps – student site.

IQ1. What are the antecedents of negative emotions, (in particular frustration and anger) in call center customers?

IQ2. What emotional regulation tactics do customers use before, during and after the telephone encounter?

IQ3. What are the perceptions of customers on the effects of negative emotions particularly frustration and anger) and anger on satisfaction and loyalty?

Upload your transcripts and the ranked antecedents of frustration (same document) on google apps: <https://sites.google.com/a/esc-rennes.fr/qm507-508-student-site/1-focus-group>.

Each group of 3 should provide one word document (NOT Pdf) containing:

The names of the team and a line outlining your role in the group (moderator, logistics, transcribing, note-taking during session etc...) and how you shared the work out. (Maximum 100 words)

- The demographic details of the participants (age, gender, nationality)
- The transcript of the focus group (word for word, not a summary)

## **Appendix 9. Study 3. The discussion guide**

Please think of a time when you have had a difficult call-center encounter, and tell us about the experience.

- 1.** What was the reason for the call?
- 2.** How did you feel before you made the call? (Follow-up if necessary Hint: e.g. anxious, happy, no particular emotion, etc.)
- 3.** Did you anticipate that the reason you contacted the call-center for was going to generate difficulties? Why/why not?
- 4.** What happened when you called?
- 5.** How did you feel during the interaction with the call-center representative? Why?
- 6.** Did you feel frustrated or angry at any point? Why? (*Follow-up if necessary* Hint: who or what caused the frustration/anger)
- 7.** How did you respond to the call-center representative's attitude? (Follow-up if necessary Hint: Did the person engage in any form of emotional regulation? e.g. try to remain calm when feeling frustrated, try to act politely even though the situation was not at all what he/she expected, expressed discomfort openly, showed anger to the call-center representative, insulted, etc.)
- 8.** In making the call, did you solve the problem, situation or doubt you had before? In other words, did you attain the goal you had for the call? Please, explain.
- 9.** How did you feel after the conversation ended? ((Follow-up if necessary Hint: If they say relief ask where this relief came from. If not ask what emotion remained and why)
- 10.** Would you ever contact the call-center again?
- 11.** After that particular experience, how did you feel towards the company providing the call-center service?

END BY SAYING THANK YOU



Appendix 10. Study 3. Transcripts of 3 selected focus-groups

Study 3. Focus-group 4 – Transcript in English

Number	Gender	Age	Business Activity
4	Male	24	Bank
	Male	24	Phone company
	Female	22	Phone company
	Male	23	Computer company

**Moderator:** Thanks everyone for coming. So I'm going to ask you to think of a time when you've had a difficult call-center encounter and just you have to tell us about the experience. So first, what was the reason for the call?

**Respondent 1:** I wanted to cancel one of the services of a bank I was a customer at.

**Respondent 2:** I had a problem with my cellphone, I couldn't get any signal since it was on the plane mode and I wanted to solve the problem

**Respondent 3:** My phone was stolen and I wanted to buy a new one with my *Company Name's* points.

**Respondent 4:** It was with *Company Name*. I had a problem with my computer and I wanted to take the guarantee but it was too late.

**Moderator:** Ok, so now I'm going to ask you about your feelings before you make the call. Did you feel for example anxious, angry... Did you feel any particular emotion?

**Respondent 1:** I felt like it was not a big deal because the problem was very clear and I saw the problem being solved very quickly and without any complications, so I had no particular feeling.

**Respondent 2:** Before the call I was angry because I had checked on the Internet this specific problem and it was saying that there was no solution so I knew I would be in trouble.

**Moderator:** Ahah, I see. Ok, what about you Coralline?

**Respondent 3:** I was already tensed because I know how it goes with this kind of phone calls and *Company Name* particularly, so I knew I was not going to get what I want.

**Respondent 4:** I was angry because I already had problems with the *Company Name* Store in Nantes so I thought I would have one with call center.

**Moderator:** Ok fine. Did you anticipate that the reason you...ok sorry I was unable to read the sentence. I'll do it again: Did you anticipate that the reason you contacted the call center for was going to generate difficulties? Why or why not?

**Respondent 1:** Well, no, I didn't predict there would be any problem because my request was very simple and there were reasons behind it even though it was a bit a negative



request but it was very clear what I wanted and I knew I had all the rights to demand what I was asking for.

**Respondent 2:** Hum... yes because like I said, I had before checked on the internet and it was a problem of construction so I was calling just to check... what was the question already?

**Moderator:** Hm...Did you anticipate that the reason you contacted the call center for was going to generate difficulties? Why or why not?

**Respondent 2:** Yes I knew but I didn't anticipate it would be that much.

**Respondent 3:** Yes I knew it too because that's how it works with these people. So I knew I would be waiting, that I wouldn't get what I wanted, and have to yell and say "I'm going to change, I'm going to leave and see your competitors, I knew it was going to be that way.

**Respondent 4:** Yes I knew because *Company Name* told me that the guarantee was one year whereas in Europe it is 2, so it was like a legal thing to check with them. So I knew it, yes.

**Moderator:** Ok thank you. So, when you called, what happened?

**Respondent 1:** Do you want the whole story or just a particular moment?

**Moderator:** Well, I mean, when you called, what happened first? And next? How did things go?

**Respondent 1:** Ok. I called first and I guess it's just the way it works, you gotta talk to a first person who listens to what your request is to direct you to the right department. So I explained very clearly what the problem was because I knew he was the person who decides or helps me he was just the person who directs me. And for the very first minute, there were already complications because the person was actually trying to dig more information from me, giving me excuse that he needs to find out the problem to help me. So I had to explain the whole story, the reasons why I want to do that and all the details including to the person who doesn't make any decision.

**Moderator:** Ok and did you have to wait a lot?

**Respondent 1:** I did not. Well I explained and he said "I'd love to help you" and everything but I have to transfer you to another department. I got transferred and re-explained everything and it turns out that this person was unable to help me so he transferred me to another department. That department wasn't aware of my name, my case at all so I had to explain it again and they tried to take care of my issue but it didn't work out so they transferred me again to another point which was the last one. They called their manager, explained about the case and found a solution.

**Respondent 2:** Almost the same situation. I called on Friday afternoon, I chose with my keyboard the service I wanted to talk to, I waited 30 minutes to get someone, I explained my problem and they transferred me to someone else because I was not talking to the good people. Then I waited again for 30 minutes and then I talked to another person.

**Respondent 3:** I waited for like half an hour and it was the same: I had to choose on my keyboard to get the right service. I didn't have any login or password so I couldn't do it on the Internet otherwise I would have but still at every step on the telephone they were asking for both login and password. I waited, waited for having someone to talk to and it

was very long and then they told me: “okay but the line is at your dad’s name, he’s the one who pays so we can’t do anything for you”. So I said “yes but I’m the user of the line, my phone just got stolen, I need another one like very soon, so deal with it”. They answered “if your dad can call or if a friend calls for him pretending he’s him, it’s okay”.

**Respondent 4:** I didn’t wait so much, because when you call *Company Name* it’s quite fast but I had to wait after because the person on the phone was not the good person to talk to. So they transferred me like 2 or 3 times to another person. Finally I have someone who’s the boss of this call center because it was a legal issue.

**Moderator:** Ok thank you all! Now I’d like to know how you felt during the interaction with the call center representative and why.

**Respondent 1:** Okay. Well again, due to the fact that they were transferring me all the time and me having to explain that same procedure over and over, I did it 4 times, and after 4 times my frustration was pretty high and I was really frustrated but I was still trying to, you know, talk properly to every one of them because they are people I haven’t talked before and they have nothing to do with my frustration, but they seem to become more understanding because it’s been 4 times I’ve explaining the same thing and you know, the problem was solved pretty fast afterwards.

**Moderator:** Fine.

**Respondent 2:** I was waiting for 30 minutes to talk first to a technician who wasn’t speaking of offer or business with me, I was really pissed off because it was a technical problem and a really stupid one. He told me there was no solution, he gave me a saleswoman on the telephone who made me a very stupid offer, a very bad proposition and I was very angry.

**Respondent 3:** I was really upset too because it’s the way it works. You can’t go to a shop because it’s only on the phone, I couldn’t go on the Internet because as I said I didn’t have my login and password, but then you have to wait for half an hour, and people are not nice to you, they know that it’s bullshit what they do with “who’s paying and who’s using the line” because they told me: make a friend call, put the name of your father it’s going to be ok, and yet, they don’t do anything to make it easier for us so I was upset before I call, during and after.

*Laughs.*

**Respondent 4:** I was angry before because I had a problem with the *Company Name* store, and with the first person because, the same, he was a technician and he tried to help me but it was not him I had to talk to. So he transferred me to another person and it was okay because he could solve the problem. I was feeling better.

**Moderator:** Okay. So then, did you feel frustrated or angry at any point? Why? For example, who or what caused the frustration or the anger?

**Respondent 1:** I was frustrated at some point because the person who was actually taking care of my issue, the final person, he was taking a very long time to look at my information and I really did not see the reason why he had to go so deep into, you know, the information of my account and when it was opened and all these questions before he actually stepped into solving my problem, that’s what caused the most anger and it made me, you know, asking him what was the point of this. He couldn’t find an answer so he

tried to “oh I see you live in New-York, I’ve lived there and he tried to make a completely aside conversation while he was trying to search information, his excuses were “our system is a little bit slow, and this and that” but I know exactly how it works he was just trying to get some time and I simply told him “ you don’t have to try to find an approach, I’m not going to give you a negative feedback on a customer service call, just tell me if you’re able to answer my question, don’t make me waste my time if you’re not about to solve my problem” and he was still trying to get out of the way because I guess it’s a sort of policy of this company so that what was caused the most frustration, these unnecessary questions. It pissed me off; I was already waiting for like 40 minutes to talk to the right person whereas the actual problem took them like 4 minutes to be solved.

**Moderator:** Thanks. What about you *Respondent 2*?

**Respondent 2:** I was angry because I waited for half an hour to get someone to the phone, and she told me it’s not the good person you’re talking to so I waited again then spoke to a very technical guy using very technical words I couldn’t understand to finish by “I can’t do anything” and I got even more angry when I talked to the salesperson who offered me something ridiculous so I was angry 3 times: because I waited, because language was too technical and because the last one tried to sell me something else

**Respondent 3:** I was upset before I called because my phone got stolen, then because it’s crazy a company that big in France which must have phone calls like mine every 30 seconds still doesn’t manage to do it well and when you go to a store you wait for like an hour, you have someone in face-to-face with you who says: “Heu no you have to call, we can’t do that in the store”, you’re like “OK” then you wait for another hour on the phone and the problem is still not fixed so you have to make someone lie and the worst is that they know about this. It’s non-sense.

**Respondent 4:** And I was angry before the call because I didn’t understand why there was a problem with this because the law was clear, in Europe it was a 2-year guarantee. But just before, not during the call.

**Moderator:** How did you respond to the call center representative attitude? Did the person engage any form of regulation? .....

**Respondent 1:** Yes, they tried to mitigate the tension during the call but again it’s understood because they tried to satisfy every customer, so no one is angry on the phone normally, but he was made me even angrier because more he tried to make things right and seems too colorful and nice, more I became more frustrated. I had to stop him and say: “tell me if you can or not because I felt I’m wasting my time and they say we can do it, we will do it, goodbye! Thank you very much and if you need anything else, please give us a call back” and they tried to make it up and I think they did pretty well. But I think they tried to follow the protocol too much and I guess I talked to the person without so much experience to calm me down

**Moderator:** So, you respond to him politely, but you want to go straight to the point, right?

**Respondent 1:** I was always very polite because I know the guy wanted to help me, so I was not definitely create a negative tension. But it was too much and it wasn’t what I wanted to hear, I wanted “yes or no”, and after that they gave me a proper answer.

**Respondent 2:** The technician tried to slow me down but I was losing time because he used technical words. The other sale girl who I talk to, she was very peaceful and just she said “I’m very sorry, it’s the last offer I can do”. I answered: “OK, goodbye”

**Respondent 3:** Mine, the person had no feelings, like a machine. Maybe they have too many calls to treat per day like mine. He said “I’m sorry, we can’t do anything, I’m sorry, we can do anything, I’m sorry, we can’t do anything. Ok, I will talk to my manager. I’m sorry we can do anything.” It makes me angry every time because I wanted something to be done but they didn’t even care. So I said: “I will go to the other competitors, I will release my contract!”. They said ok, they don’t care about their own company. She was like: “Ok, it’s finished”.

**Respondent 4:** I didn’t have any problem with them

**Moderator:** You were quiet, angry? How were you talking to them?

**Respondent 4:** I was angry at the beginning of the call. After, it was ok. They understood the problem, not the first guy because he was a technician but after it was ok.

**Respondent 3:** In making the call, did you solve the problem, situation or doubt you had before? In other words, did you attain the goal you had for the call? Could you please tell us more about this?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, it was solved after long explanation. I feel like a waste of time. But the problem was solved and the last part of the conversation was the sweetest. Because they tried to apologize for what they did during 30min and they were happy able to help me and they tried to create the best last impression. Because in the U.S, after the call, they send you a survey. So you have to describe how was the customer service, very helpful or not. And you rate the company. It’s an important part for the company. The last part was nice and smooth and actually works very well. They solved my problem.

**Respondent 2:** They didn’t solve my problem. The phone was broken. They said it was my responsibility. In order to have a new one, I had to sign another one-year contract. They didn’t try to fix it or to purpose to change with another one. They said, it’s a technical problem, it happens. Or if you want a new one without contract, you can pay 400 euros. So, I said no.

**Respondent 3:** They didn’t solve it at all. I finalize the call in order to turn up my contract and go to the competition. And I signed a contract with new operator and I got a new phone for one euro.

**Respondent 4:** Yes, they solved it. They called the apple store. I brought back the computer to the *Company Name* store and they fixed it in one week. It was ok.

**Moderator:** How did you feel after the conversation ended?

**Respondent 1:** I felt pretty happy because every single call is more like a battle because most of the case people don’t understand your request or they just tried to come up with the reason, not to give you extra point, give you extra stuff. Overall it was very satisfied. My expectation from this kind of call is: it’s not bad to spend 30 min and to fix the problem. But it’s not acceptable to spend more time without solution at the end, and I can think changing of company and release my contract: to try to find a different approach to solve problem.

**Respondent 2:** I wanted to end the conversation because I know that they didn't want to fix my problem. It was a mix of believe and angry.

**Respondent 3:** I was angry of course! But I had my own solution, knew what and how I was going to do: go to the competition and get a new phone. I was upset but I knew what to do.

**Respondent 4:** I was happy, because without the guarantee it was 100 euros to fix it. I was quiet happy that *Company Name* took it for them.

**Moderator:** Would you ever contact the call center again?

**Respondent 1:** Not unless there's no other option. But if I haven't another option more convenient, I will definitely use the call service to solve my problem, this one in particular or others.

**Respondent 2:** Not this one in particular because I'm not client anymore. The company was Bouygues telecom. But I know all the phone companies are dealing lots of subjects by phone. So, I'm going to call maybe later if I have problem.

**Respondent 3:** The same. I will not calling Orange because now I'm at *Company Name*. But I know if I have a problem, I have to call again because they don't anything in the shop. They just selling phone.

**Respondent 4:** Yes, I will probably call again. Now I have also my phone with them and they answer very quickly with great efficiency.

**Moderator:** Last but not least, after that particular experience, how did you feel towards the company providing the call center service?

**Respondent 1:** I felt they were a little bit unprofessional and there is a huge gap to not improve. The reason why it's not professional: there is a huge amount of calls, to treat and to satisfy and every problem is different. It's hard to manage the customer satisfaction. That's why the customer has to be transfer at least two times, in different departments. Overall it's very normal and good experience the call service in the US.

**Respondent 2:** Same things. I know every company, every call centers. You have to wait because there are so much people who call. I knew that certain companies can fix your problem in 10min but in this case, it was not my situation.

**Respondent 3:** The same. I was upset and after I cool off. I knew it the same everywhere. You have to cope with it and hope that you will not losing so much time.

**Respondent 4:** The same. I was not angry. I was just angry with the store. The store and the call center are 2 different parts. Not angry against the call center.

**Moderator:** Ok. Thank you, well done and we're done!

**Study 3. Focus-group 11 – Transcript in English**

Number	Gender	Age	Business Activity
11	Female	22	Software company
	Female	21	Internet company
	Male	22	Phone company
	Female	23	Phone company

**Moderator:** Hello everybody, we are here to carry out a Focus Group. So, just to give the situation in few words, the Focus Group is a small group qualitative analysis with the aim to answer an analysis, I mean a precise question. That is why today we are going to know, try to understand where the frustrations and the anger that we feel come from when we are reaching a call center. So, I’m going to be your interlocutor, your mediator during this debate and we are finally going to understand where these frustration and anger come from. So, first of all I would like each of you describe a little bit his experience with the call center: what was the reason for the call, which company, your feeling before you made the call and finally did you already anticipate that the reason you contacted the call-center for was going to generate difficulties.

**Respondent 1:** So in my case the call had been given in the surroundings of my internship in *Company Name*. Actually I had a worry concerning tables that I mainly used as tools and could be used by only one person a time and if a person used this table, another person couldn’t use it. Except that my own account, in fact the problem is a little bit difficult, my own account (well) unlocked the table access to the other in fact. So I had to call our call center which was located in Romania and which, let’s say, hadn’t a good reputation in the way that everybody (well) had problems with hem and often had to directly see our computer department which was located in our premises.

**Moderator:** So before the call you already had bad preconceived ideas?

**Respondent 1:** There’s, I knew it was certainly going to last a very long time and they were certainly going to call me back later and I will certainly have to (well), cause in fact we had a ticket system if our problem was very important, we had a ticket system made a way that we could directly go to see the team onsite but we even though went to the call center before going to see the onsite team but I doubt that I’m going have to...

**Moderator:** Wait

**Respondent 1:** Wait, there’s.

**Moderator:** And as a result, *Respondent 2*?

**Respondent 2:** Me, I had to call *Company Name2* for a box issue, which didn’t work. The problem being I knew that it will generate difficulties since I didn’t have the account number, the bill, well, all client information which could make understands to *Company Name2* that I really was a customer of this box. That’s make I knew they were going to ask me questions to which I didn’t have answer. So straight away, I was already irritated because I knew it was a long time it didn’t work and for the price we pay it’s not

necessarily normal, that after they ask questions to which I couldn't answer and I was sure it will cause troubles.

**Moderator:** All right. *Respondent 3?*

**Respondent 3:** For me, on my side, it was with a telephone operator, so *Company Name3*. Also a problem of this kind, bah I knew I hadn't my client information but I knew they could find me back. Well, the problem that I was already aware of is concerning the billing level, they had over charged me so I knew I will have to argue in order to they retribute me the money.

**Respondent 4:** And so in my case it was, I called the *Company Name3* operator for a telephone package and mobile change after I received a call concerning an offer. So I was in very good conditions, it was only for a mobile and telephone package change.

**Moderator:** All right. And as a result, so (well) what happened during the call, what did you feel and where actually your frustration or your anger came from?

**Respondent 1:** Then concerning my case, plus it was in Romania, there was the language barrier too which made that bah obviously I had to enunciate even if sometimes I had to spell some words cause they had difficulties to understand what we said. So, obviously this made the call more painful. Then, we can't deny my problem was enough complex, but (well) what upset me a little bit is that instead of listening to me, the person automatically tried to solve the thing except that even for me it was hard to explain so she didn't completely understand what I was saying, plus I though she didn't listen carefully and so I said to her, well listen if you think you can't resolve the issue, tell me directly this way I could go to see the dedicated department, give me actually the access for the department but they didn't want, they absolutely wanted to solve the problem whereas I clearly knew it will be a tall order to settle the issue.

**Moderator:** Ok so well during the call what concretely happened, do they have resolve the...?

**Respondent 1:** Bah no, they didn't solve it and (well) so I waited they send me, like I said the ticket system, to be able to go directly to the onsite department services which even them had difficulties to solve the problem.

**Moderator:** Fine.

**Respondent 1:** So (well)... So (well)... It's...

**Moderator:** How long was it approximately?

**Respondent 1:** It took (well)... Cause in fact it's a little bit weird cause it's rather by 15 minutes round cause in fact if they didn't succeed in resolving your problem in the 15 minutes, they will tell you, well listen I'll call you back. So I told yeah, but in fact the problem lasted all the day, well it didn't last all day long (well), I mean I wasn't on the phone from 8a.m to 8p.m, but it was by 15 minutes rounds this way they told you we call you back except during this laps of time, the moment when they call back you're not systematically at your desk so you have to call them back again, you didn't have the same interlocutor, so well...

**Moderator:** And so well, what was your own reaction with the interlocutor? Have you been upset, did you try to keep calm?



**Respondent 1:** Bah in addition knowing that there were already issues with the call center before, in fact it's not a question of being upset anymore or about keeping its calm, it is just that from the moment you know it is going to take time, you're a little bit discouraged in quotes. For my part, I hadn't specific financial interests or anything at stake, it was just obstructed me in my work, and there is a moment where you can do anything, so anyway. It's more, it's not necessarily about irritation but (well)...

**Moderator:** So well what upset you in quotes was first the slowness (...),

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Moderator:** ...the fact that they were incompetents after all?

**Respondent 1:** Well well I think in fact, I can't really say they are incompetents because in my mind it's already hard to manage a computer system from distance, for me what I find more difficult, I mean what is not normal, it's that the interlocutor had difficulties to understand you. Well, in itself, for computer problem it's already complicated if the person doesn't know the vocabulary of if she doesn't know the French basic vocabulary...

**Moderator – But you understood what she told you, because in fact it's about computer, did she use technical terms?**

**Respondent 1:** No, no, however she didn't really have technical terms. It's just I think you have to understand what customers will tell you when you are a call center employee and (well) here clearly considering it was from distance...

**Moderator:** All right. Does anybody want (well) to comment a little bit?

**Respondent 3:** I can rebound on *Respondent 1* who is talking about language problems. Anyway, well not all call centers, but *Company Name3*'s call centers, some of them are delocalized and this fact bah effectively there is a language barrier on some subjects and so we constantly had to repeat or they have to tell us ah I didn't understand. In the end it is a little bit boring.

**Respondent 1:** Because there it is, for me I also had this with airlines. It's the same, it's delocalized (well) so I don't know if telephone operators, if they are all...

**Respondent 3:** No, not necessarily all of them but (well)...

**Respondent 1:** Not necessarily. Was it the case for *Company Name2*, or... ?

**Respondent 3:** No but for *Company Name3* a part is delocalized; however *Company Name4* it's in France except suppliers who are sometimes delocalized too. So well depending on situations, it's always a little bit complicated, as soon as it's delocalized there is an misunderstanding risk, and it makes the call longer as well, it's... we don't have time to lose, it's upsetting.

**Respondent 1:** We are already irritated when we call. For instance when we reach a call center we're systematically a little bit irritated.

**Respondent 2:** Ah this is sure!

**Moderator:** Except for *Respondent 4*, did you lose your temper?

**Respondent 4:** No, I wasn't irritated, I just wanted, I just wanted to have (well) an offer for a telephone package. And so in fact I had... during the first call one proposition has

been made (well) that I accepted. Then I received an email and unfortunately on the next bill, they invoiced a telephone package more expensive than what has been decided in fact (well)... So on the, on the agreement I have given so it's from this moment where issues came from because I tried a lot of times to join them. There were a never-ending wait. And (well) I had few different persons on the phone. And so the first person told me effectively that it was their mistake and they will rectify next month this overpaid bill. But, the next month they didn't resolve this. So I had to call again, I had again a new person who wasn't informed at all concerning the file so I had to re-explain. Except that this other person didn't understand because she hadn't, they didn't put... communicate on the files... excel files (well) for the file's follow-up so she didn't understand. She had someone else who finally has certified that I had, we had this agreement and so it was interminable.

**Respondent 1:** This is, this is the interlocutors change, well I think there is another issue it's... in the... in these kind of system, the files aren't well followed and you have to explain again this story each time you have a new person on the phone.

**Respondent 2:** And what is, what is unbearable moreover it's that during a moment, I know that I also had problems with *Company Name3* for a while. They did their communication, the advertising on the fact that their after-sale services was exactly that we will have a good follow-up, we will have an unique interlocutor, that when we call once and (bah) when we call three times we have still the same person and so like that it's true that the person can follow its files. For me when I, when I wanted to stop, well to suspend my subscription (well) during few months, they were conciliatory but the issue is that I had to call several times (well) for I don't remember the reason but in any case, each time I had to explain again everything and they tell you in their add, their communication, their TV spots, we have a unique interlocutor it's totally false and after it's really tiring and particularly irritating to be forced to repeat many times a story that is complicated, long which we had to come back as you said *Respondent 4* « I received an email there is such time after there is this, then this, then this which happened and people doesn't always understand the subtleties. And this is a monumental loss of time after it's true that it must... we often say that we don't have to be bad, well we shouldn't be disagreeable with its... with the person we had on the phone it's difficult to keep calm (well) when we see we aren't understood concerning the language or the content.

**Moderator:** And you *Respondent 4*, compared to this case did you succeed to keep your calm or was even more upset on the phone?

**Respondent 4:** Yes, I succeeded to stay calm but I didn't understand in fact I was asking each time one (well) one person on the phone, well the person I had and they couldn't give me this person. I didn't understand why, why (well)... they couldn't give me the person on the phone. She was already on communication so I had to explain again and I kept my calm but it's true that it's enough tiring.

**Moderator:** And you *Respondent 3*, how was the call?

**Respondent 3:** Well so actually me I took the multi-pack that is to say there is (well) internet, the box and the mobile phone and so the multi-pack offer is supposed to be a unified offer so we have an invoice with all the services except that in the facts it's not this at all. It's two invoices well separate and in the *Company Name3* service it's also two separate services. So there are counselors who can deal with the calls concerning the

mobile offer and counselors who deal with the internet offer. And so (well) ... there is nobody who deals with the multi-pack offer both at the same time. So it's always one and then the other one so when there is an issue we had to call the mobile offer or the other one no matter. Explain the situation, they send us to the other service. The other service tells us "of course! Oh no it's my colleague who is in front of me who can deal with this issue." So it's like that during two or three calls. And so after, I'm a little bit upset. I told « so now who ever deals with this situation and (well) so I had a person in charge I guess and who took the call and settled the situation. But there you go the issue is that when we try to unify all these offers behind the counselor has to be competent and able to answer our demands. Well, it's sufficiently abnormal I think.

**Respondent 1:** Yes it's too neglected actually.

**Respondent 3:** Yes but here, well it's rather incredible I think.

**Respondent2:** And you had the impression that being upset changed something?

**Respondent3:** Yes. Yes, yes and so I told them listen to me, never mind if you want to charge me more on this, invoice but I am going to call the Telecom mediator and then we will see what they are going to say and then he gave me the, the person in charge and there it was settled but well...

**Moderator:** So for you raise one's voice (well) it's ...

**Respondent 3:** Not necessarily ...

**Moderator:** it allowed resolving the problem...

**Respondent 3:** It's not necessarily raising one's voice but it's to be...

**Respondent 2:** It's to be firm.

**Respondent 4:** Threaten them.

**Respondent 3:** There you go.

**Respondent 4:** Threaten them to change and to go to their competitors.

**Respondent 3:** For me, for me, in my case, it was really... (well) being firm, showing them we also have information because the majority is going to say « ah I am going... I think that there is this so I am going to call someone and then you will see what you will see. But most of the time they aren't scared so we really have to give them the good terms or (well) give them articles from the civil code it's bloody stupid but it's (well), it's scaring them and there they give you the person in charge.

**Respondent 1:** It's not right however. Well I know actually I don't do it because I know that it doesn't serve to get on nerves and indeed I put myself in their shoes who is in front of me and who wasn't necessarily all the arguments but it remains a little complicated because at the same time we think it's not necessarily its fault but in the other hand we haven't... we haven't what we want and we haven't the service we would like to have so...

**Respondent 2:** That is to say it's not personal in fact when we are getting upset, it's not nice, it's not necessarily nice for the person because it's someone who works, who didn't ask for anything, who gets up in the morning and who goes to work but who... it's... we aren't mad with this person in particular but the system, we are mad with the system and the firm organization which is at the opposite.

**Respondent 1:** It's the first person well it's the first contact we had so inevitably it's always on them it's fall on so (well) ...

**Respondent 3:** Yes but they are representatives of their brand in the meantime so (well) after...

**Respondent 1:** Yes, yes...

**Respondent 3:** It's also normal that when you have an interlocutor in face of you, you are upset against this interlocutor even if it's...

**Respondent 2:** Even if you know it is not the person.

**Respondent 1:** Yes, yes, but it's sure but I also find it's rather the responsibility of the... no, no, the responsibility of the firm it means that ...

**Respondent 2:** To train ...

**Respondent 1:** It's their role to train. And I think that because it's call centers well we are... it costs, so necessarily they will relocate, too bad if it's foreigners who will answer the phone, there aren't necessarily people who are educated as, as they should be. And in fact it's one of, it's one of the activities I finally find not that much taken into account, but finally you can even through meet lot of problems especially, telephone operators it's even though a (well) a very good example but me I know that it's the same with the social security, well the *Company Name3*, them clearly, they don't answer the phone so like this at least there is no issue. You clearly have to move to the store to have an answer because they have a number which is not working. So...

**Respondent 2:** Once I tried to call the *Company Name5*, but this time, they were really not answering. But I just wanted to add something. It's just that the problem, we said that getting annoyed could solve the problem, no! Whatever you do, you need to threaten them. But threatening means threatening to leave, but in my problem with *Company Name2*, I did not intend to leave because I was under the subscription of a company that wasn't mine so I couldn't take the decision to tell them I wanted to leave. "I am going to stop subscribing to your telephone operator". It was absolutely not my responsibility; we just have no possible decision on that. So, I needed to solve the problem, That was it. And I couldn't put any pressure on them, except, eventually, screaming at them because it wasn't normal that I wasn't able to work for two days because I had no internet access. I couldn't do anything else! And in that case, you just have to suffer in silence because (because...), we don't make any progress and every time, it took me all day, I think it was even two days during which I called an untold number of times. After some times, actually, the interlocutor says, cuts short saying: "Well, we don't have the solution, we are going to look for it and we'll call you back". Finally, it doesn't help and well, it was really long. And the problem in question is that I had, I had identification problems because, they asked me my client information that I hadn't because I wasn't the contract subscriber but it was the company, most likely the accounting department. So when I was asked the date or the place of birth of the subscriber, it was impossible to give those of the accountant! It started to...it was really, really complicated. And (and, and), what's more, they didn't solve the problem, they wasn't able to do so. They couldn't solve the problem, I needed to, I needed to look into the company accountability, bills with numbers and client information they were asking because they couldn't help me!

**Moderator:** So, the next question is about that, after the call, finally, do your doubts, problems have been solved? How did you feel after the call and will you recall a Call Center if needed?

**Respondent 3:** Well, if I can avoid it...clearly...

**Respondent 2:** Yes, if we can avoid it!

**Respondent 1:** Yes, that's it...if we can avoid it, no.

**Respondent 4:** But most of the time, we have no other choice.

**Respondent 2:** The problem is that we are forced. It's no pleasure cruise, it takes time, sometimes it's (it's), the call is charged. Well, we know that we can get angry. Besides, we may have no solution to our problem. No, no, it's sure that if we can avoid calling them. What's more, that's why every online services, online after-sales-service, most of the time, they answer when you call, no matter who, they will first say "Did you look on the internet, in our FAQ?". Yes, well, anyway, your FAQ only answers to four questions, so when it goes out of the beaten track, well, it doesn't answer our questions anymore. But it's true that, if we can, after-sales-services are better made because finally, well, the question is written in black and white, the answer too and we can cope like this and at least, we don't need to spend time or money.

**Moderator:** But globally, all of your problems have been solved but it took a lot of time, it was difficult...

**Respondent 4:** There you go, exactly. For me, my problem was solved but I had to call at least five, six calls. Well, I had to call five, six times before it was solved.

**Respondent 1:** For my case, they still have problems.

**Respondent 4:** And what's more, over several months!

**Respondent 3:** For me, they didn't solve, well the service, well the Call Center didn't solve it. They told me "Yes, well, it's complicated, so send me an email." And I sent back an email. And the response told me to call back the Call center.

**Moderator:** Well, did you give up or...?

**Respondent 3:** I called back the Call Center and there, I gave them the email. I told them "There it is, the email says that, well, in principle, you need to reimburse me what I don't have to pay." And well, I told them the email said that, even if I didn't show it. And they saw I already called...I don't even count! And well, they told me, they did the rebate.

**Moderator:** And finally, what was the impact on the vision you had from the company?

**Respondent 3:** Well, really bad.

**Respondent 2:** Yes, really bad!

**Respondent 1:** Really bad!

**Respondent 2:** For sure.

**Respondent 3:** Clearly! It makes, it's rude but, it really makes "we don't respect our clients, once we've got them, well, they are muggings and we make them do what we

want.” And in parallel, well, there is no service at the back. Once we’ve got the client, there is no service anymore. There is the problem.

**Respondent 1:** What’s more, it’s misleading publicity. It’s what you said.

**Respondent 2:** Yes.

**Respondent 1:** Beyond that, it’s misleading publicity. Because, every telephone operators! The number of time we see on TV “1<sup>st</sup> in customer relationship” and then, when you have your own experience, you see it’s not true. And personally, I think what is becoming even more serious is that in people’s mind, well, I don’t know, tell me if I’m wrong, we already know that we’ll have troubles !

**Respondent 2:** We already have a problem, it’s an additional problem.

**Respondent 1:** It’s even more, we are had or not. In customer’s mind, it’s “Well, yes, it’s going to be a pain, it’s going to take months...”

**Respondent 4:** Yes, we already know it’s going to be long.

**Respondent 1:** There it is, people, it’s not about getting angry anymore or they don’t know...they guess that anyway, it’s going to be long.

**Respondent 2:** And besides, then, when they don’t find the answer, I think they are really throwing the towel quickly. Either they shorten the call; they direct to emails, to system where they call you back, I don’t know what. Or either, when it’s a material problem, they say “Well, we don’t have any answer, well, send back to us your box, we are going to change it.” Yes but there, it’s not going to make me work in two hours, the box, they are sending another one to you two weeks later. Well, I need to work right now. It’s, finally, they say “We don’t have the solution, so, basically, we start from scratch again and we start over.” But that is not an efficient solution. There, it’s not a service, it’s only substitution. And well, yes, it’s true, it gives a really bad image of the company.

**Respondent 3:** Yes and also, it’s not even that. It’s that, most of the time, there is a problem and, us, in parallel of this problem, well, we pay.

**Respondent 2:** And after that, you’ve got the impression to pay for nothing.

**Respondent 3:** Well, for me, it’s the image I’ve got. It’s that most of the time, well, during the problem, we can’t use our box, the internet service doesn’t work. The phone service doesn’t work. Well, we continue to pay for a service we don’t have. So, after that, there is no return of, I don’t know, little special offers, a little goodwill gesture. It’s really difficult to obtain something whereas it should be well...in such a case, the box isn’t working for three weeks, well it’s about the proportion of the three weeks because, frankly...that, that would have a positive impact. They don’t have that behavior.

**Respondent 2:** And most of the time, when we tell them that, well I don’t know, I told them « I wasn’t able to use my box for three weeks, it’s not normal...”, it was for *Company Name3* and well, he told me, he answered me “You may ask for a rebate after, so, when the problem will be solved. You may say that from this day to this day, you hadn’t access to the internet. You’ll be refunded.” So, it means that, once the problem solved, your first problem, it means that you have the internet access back, you go into a second problem which is to try to be reimbursed. And so, there, you start a move that is going to last for a long time and...

**Respondent 3:** Yes and even with that, it's not our responsibility to make to move to ask for a customer rebate. They have to be proactive on those things. Because precisely, when we ask for it, when I ask for it, I feel it's not a commercial gesture, it would be normal they do it. Because, at the end, if they had this proactive move to tell me "Well, we are going to make a commercial gesture", there, I would have took it really positively "Waaa, they are making a gesture, that's cool!". But there, it's really, no, you have to go looking for it. Well, it's really unpleasant.

**Moderator:** Well, ok, it's clear. We thank you a lot for your participation.

**Study 3. Focus-group 32 – Transcript in English**

Number	Gender	Age	Business Activity
32	Female	23	Phone company
	Female	24	Internet company
	Female	25	Phone company
	Female	23	Insurance

**Moderator:** So, what was the reason for the call?

**Respondent 1:** I was calling to change my contract and I was hoping that I could have a special price because I was staying with the same operator. Also, I wanted to keep my number.

**Respondent 2:** For me, the reason was because my box didn't work so I had to ask for a code to change the devices.

**Respondent 3:** I called 3 times to change my cellphone who was broken 3 times, in order that they replace it.

**Respondent 4:** My car broke down in the highway so I had to call the assistance to have them to bring me home.

**Moderator:** Ok, second question, how did you feel before you made the call?

**Respondent 1:** I was OK, I really tough I could have a good deal with them.

**Respondent 2:** I wasn't anxious or anything, I just thought that it was boring to call the call-center and I was not happy to do this. *[She said that like the call-center will answer her question with ease and didn't expect any complication].*

**Respondent 3:** I knew that I would need time to call because the waiting time is sometimes very long but I was not angry at all.

**Respondent 4:** Right before calling I was really really angry because my car had only two months, so it was a brand new car. Something broke down in it and it wasn't normal so I was angry.



**Moderator:** Did you anticipate that the reason you contacted the call-center for was going to generate difficulties? Why/why not?

**Respondent 1:** I really didn't think that I would have any difficulties to have my deals because I was staying with the same operator and usually they are pretty easy with that, so I was pretty sure I could have my deal.

**Respondent 2:** Same as *Respondent 1*. I didn't think that it will be difficult to have my information because it was just a question about a code so, for me it was not difficult.

**Respondent 3:** The first time I called, I thought that it will be very complicated, but the last time I called I knew that it will be like, very easy and very quick.

**Respondent 4:** For me, no, I thought that it was going to be, well not easy because it was assistance so it's not so easy but I thought it was ok because I was a client and I was paying for my insurance. I thought that would be easy but ... no.

**Moderator:** What happened when you called the call center?

**Respondent 1:** When I called, I explain my situation. I said that I wanted to change my contract, but then, I was staying with the same company. I explain that I wanted to have special price and that I wanted to keep my number. She directly explain to me that there was no possibility to get a special price, and that for my number I could have keep it but I had to paid a lot of money. I started to get angry because I thought that it wasn't normal. I explained that I wanted to change my operator, and then she clearly explains to me that she didn't care, so I just hang up.

**Respondent 2:** When I called after sales service, they just can't give me my information. The last time I called they didn't take any information about me or my problem, so they didn't have a file with my information.

**Moderator:** So you had to explain again something that you already explain to them in a previous call?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, and they had again no solution for me. [*We could feel her disappointed*].

**Respondent 3:** The last time there was no problem, they were aware of my situation because it was the third time that I exchange my cellphone. The first time it was a little bit more difficult because they needed to have proof that my cellphone was indeed broken, and it's pretty difficult to give proof that it was an accident, but it was really ok.

**Respondent 4:** For me, so the girl I had on the phone, she speaks well French but she didn't understand everything I was saying. She was like asking me lot of questions and almost the same every time. She kept asking the same questions over and over and I was on the side of the road so I was really worried. I was keeping asking her "is it in my contract? Will someone is going to pick me up soon or not?". She avoided this question so I get really upset because I was worried, she then said "right now, stop asking questions, otherwise I'm going to hang up".

**Moderator:** Ok so how did you feel during the interaction with the call-center representative and why?

**Respondent 1:** At first I felt normal as I said in the beginning, but pretty quickly I felt really angry against her. I thought she was incompetent. So I started yelling at her.

**Respondent 2:** For me, it's likely the same. In the beginning it's normal but during the conversation you understand that you will not have a solution so you get angry and you just have to listen to the person even though it doesn't make any sense.

**Respondent 3:** For me it was really simple the three times I called, they were very very attentive of what I was saying and they really tried to help me to exchange my broken cellphone.

**Respondent 4:** And for me, at the end I was really really angry but I had no choice. I had to listen to her, and be patient but I was really really frustrated

**Moderator:** Ok so I think you answered the question 6. Which is “did you feel frustrated or angry at any point and why? How did you respond to the call center representative attitude? So for example did the person engaged any form of emotional regulation?

**Respondent 1:** I responded by yelling as I said earlier, but the woman was really like, she was always repeating what she was saying to me. So it's like the dialog wouldn't go further. So I'd just keep getting angrier and angrier but she wasn't trying to calm me down but she kept repeating what she was saying which was really useless.

**Respondent 2:** For me, from my experience, effectively, the person tried to be polite and have a real discussion to find a solution for me but generally they have to give you another appointment or another call does give you an answer. *[Respondent 2 started moving her leg repeatedly as she was frustrated]*

**Respondent 3:** The three persons that I called were very patient and really wanted to help me so I didn't have any problem with them. They were really trustworthy.

**Respondent 4:** For me, she was not very nice, but I had no choice so at the end the conversation went good because I was doing what she wanted me to do. So that's it.

**Moderator:** Ok, in making the call, did you solve the problem, like the reason why you called? In other words, did you attain the goal you had for the call? Explain.

**Respondent 1:** By making the call I didn't solve my problem at all. I didn't get the deal I wanted and I almost changed my operator because with this call I really thought that I was talking to incompetent people and that I would not like to have, if I had any other problem I wouldn't like to have the same call again so in the end I kept my contract with them but I almost change it just because of that call so I wouldn't say that it solved my problem.

**Respondent 2:** As I said before, I didn't solve my problem and there was no solution so I have nothing to explain really.

**Respondent 3:** Me, I totally solved my problem because they gave me an appointment in a store in order to exchange my cellphone and it took me 2 minutes and it was ok. *[Respondent 3 sounds really satisfying and happy, she seems really relax.]*

**Respondent 4:** For me, they partly solved my problem, they sent me a taxi to drive me home so that was the good part but then when they had to fix my car they actually rent a car for that I couldn't drive because I was under 21 and they didn't find a way to find a car rental that will accept to have someone under 21 driving their car so I just had a rental car in my home that I had no right to drive. *[Respondent 4 sounds clearly disappointed by what happened at this moment. It seemed that she really thought they could help her.]*

**Moderator:** How did you feel (some of you already responded that question) after the conversation ended? Like were you relief? What kind of emotion was remaining after the call? And why?

**Respondent 1:** When I hang up the phone I was really angry. I was so angry that I decided to calm down and call the day after that because I thought that if I'd call again directly that wouldn't be helpful, because of my anger.

**Respondent 2:** I was tired because I'd spent like 4 hours on my cellphone with no solution at except I just had to wait another day. *[Respondent 2 actually seems tired, you can feel that the experience was exhausting.]*

**Respondent 3:** I felt relieved and very happy but after the service.

**Respondent 4:** I wasn't happy and I thought that the girl had really no sympathy face to my situation. After that I wanted to resign my insurance. But when you want to resign you have to wait for the anniversary dates of the year to resign it. And they received my resigning letter something like one day after and they refused it.

**Moderator:** Ok so you actually sent a resigning letter to your insurance.

**Respondent 4:** Yes.

**Moderator:** Not like *Respondent 1* who just thought about doing it.

**Respondent 4:** But I didn't do it only for this reason but it was part of the decision.

**Moderator:** Would you ever contact the call center again?

**Respondent 1:** For me, I choose a contract where I don't really have current customer service, so I usually contact them by the internet, to me it's really simpler, really faster and really less annoying.

**Moderator:** It's faster ?

**Respondent 1:** Yes, it is faster.

**Moderator:** Why is it faster ? Because it's the Internet you have not like direct connection with a guy.

**Respondent 1:** Ho yes usually it's a chat, so you speak directly with the ....

**Moderator:** So if this situation would have happened but on the chat and not on the phone like you think that you would have feel less angry or ?

**Respondent 4:** I don't think that would have because people are not writing like they're talk so

**Respondent 1:** Yes, they have like, if they had to know then I would have call, it's like the next step so, I would have think about something to tell them to make them sign my contract

**Moderator:** Ok

**Respondent 2:** Yes for me I think, I will have to contact the call center again because I think it will be a lot of other problems after.

**Respondent 3:** For me, I will definitely call back this after sales service but not if I could avoid contacting another one, it will be better because I know that I was very lucky this

time and my friends, my parents and so on have lots of bad experiences with call center services.

**Respondent 4:** For me, I will also contact them again because you have no choice there is only like call center services so It's not like you are on the side of the road of the highway and you have your computer and you can go on chat and everything, so.. Yes I will

**Moderator:** The last question is after that particular experience, how did you feel toward the company providing the call center service. And what was that company ? So that we could make a bad buzz or good buzz toward the Company!

**Respondent 1:** My company was *Company Name*

**Moderator:** So *Company Name* was a very bad experience

**Respondent 1:** Well, at that time yes, I was really angry at that moment but actually I really think that it depends on the person you get on the phone, the second person I called, the next day, was actually more understandable, so it was just way easier but well you know I think it's like that in every call center service you call it depends on the person you have on the phone.

**Moderator:** Yes it's like heads of tails

**Respondent 1:** yes

**Respondent 2:** I agree with *Respondent 1*, it depends on the person on the phone and the company was *Company Name2*, and it was the first time that I have problems with them so maybe it will be better next time.

**Moderator:** Yes you never know

**Respondent 3:** For me the company was *Company Name1* and I had lots of good return about after sales service or the technical services even the result of other people not only me, so..

**Respondent 4:** And for me it was *Company Name3*: Don't go there! And it is really expensive.

**Moderator:** How do you feel toward the company like are you angry at them?

**Respondent 4:** No, I just, I think they just don't care about one single customer so...

**Moderator:** Ok but your relationship with them like, how do you view them? Like does your call change anything of the way you...?

**Respondent 4:** Yes Yes, definitely it change the..., but it didn't change the relationship because it's not the same person but...

**Moderator:** Yes but it changes your opinion in a bad way of the company?

**Respondent 4:** Yes

**Moderator:** Ok thank you ladies and goodbye!

Appendix 11. Study 2b. Model Fit Summary

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	30	478.317	61	0	7.841
Saturated model	91	0	0		
Independence model	13	21899.153	78	0	280.758

RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	0.045	0.952	0.929	0.638
Saturated model	0	1		
Independence model	1.208	0.17	0.031	0.145

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	0.978	0.972	0.981	0.976	0.981
Saturated model	1		1		1
Independence model	0	0	0	0	0

Parsimony-Adjusted Measures

Model	PRATIO	PNFI	PCFI
Default model	0.782	0.765	0.767
Saturated model	0	0	0
Independence model	1	0	0

NCP

Model	NCP	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	417.317	351.399	490.713
Saturated model	0	0	0
Independence model	21821.153	21337.911	22310.678

FMIN

Model	FMIN	F0	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	0.332	0.29	0.244	0.341
Saturated model	0	0	0	0
Independence model	15.218	15.164	14.828	15.504

**RMSEA**

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	0.069	0.063	0.075	0
Independence model	0.441	0.436	0.446	0

**AIC**

Model	AIC	BCC	BIC	CAIC
Default model	538.317	538.907	696.489	726.489
Saturated model	182	183.788	661.788	752.788
Independence model	21925.153	21925.409	21993.695	22006.695

**ECVI**

Model	ECVI	LO 90	HI 90	MECVI
Default model	0.374	0.328	0.425	0.375
Saturated model	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.128
Independence model	15.236	14.901	15.577	15.237

**HOELTER**

Model	HOELTER 0.05	HOELTER 0.01
Default model	242	270
Independence model	7	8